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# RELIGIONS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

# RELIGIONS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

A SERIES OF LECTURES DELIVERED BY MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

EDITED BY

JAMES A. MONTGOMERY, PH.D., S.T.D.

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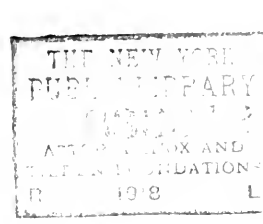
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TO

PROVOST EDGAR FAHS SMITH

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICES FOR
THE WIDER USEFULNESS OF THE UNIVERSITY,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED BY THE LECTURERS

# PREFACE

THE widespread interest in the history of religion was well attested by the enthusiasm and interest aroused by the following lectures delivered during the winter of 1916–1917 by members of the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania.

We believe that the reader will find a peculiar merit in the volume as each religion is treated by one who has made a specialty of that field. It was left to each man to set forth his subject according to his own ideas of matter and proportion—the result is the bracing individuality of each chapter, and the spontaneity of the whole.

To bring home to our readers the ideals, the history, and the significance of certain great religions has been our aim, and in our endeavor simplicity, directness, and accuracy have been our standards. We have not gone beyond the original group of University lectures in order to secure a treatment of religions not herein discussed; the book remains therefore entirely a product of the Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania.

JAMES A. MONTGOMERY
Chairman (1916–1917) of the
Group of the History of Religions,
University of Pennsylvania

December 1, 1917

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ARTHUR C. HOWLAND, PH.D.

# RELIGIONS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT

## CHAPTER I

### PRIMITIVE RELIGIONS

BY FRANK G. SPECK

BEFORE undertaking the study, brief as it may be, of primitive religions, or more exactly, the religions of primitive man, we must accept the broadest conceivable definition of the term, one which defines religion as that which expresses in life the relationship between man and the supernatural realm. We need a definition of this broad character if we intend to analyze and discuss the various types of philosophy, the rites of worship and the beliefs expressing the inter-activity between man and the supernatural beings, which play such an important part in the mental life of so-called savages. We shall proceed then, recognizing the idea that the fetish worship of the West Coast African negroes, the universalism of the Algonquian and Iroquois Indians, the demonism of the Eskimo, the ancestor worship of the South African Zulu, as well as that of the Chinese, are as much the manifestations of religion in the real sense as are the phenomena of the more advanced types—what we may term Messianic types because of the importance of the semi-divine revealer personage in them. Some idea may be gained of the astonishing diversity of the field when one realizes that, for instance, in North America alone one encounters several hundred different native languages and most of these are the avenues of expression for as

many varieties of religious belief and practice, while again in Africa, Australia, Oceania and Asia, types of religion are about as numerous as the tribes themselves. Is it any wonder, then, that until present-day methods of analysis, classification and definition are introduced into the study of primitive religions the attitude of the student is as yet that of the pioneer classifier of data in a new science?

In dealing with a subject so bewilderingly diffuse, I propose to systematize by presenting first some discussion of primitive philosophy and mythology, then to touch upon the present status of the doctrines of animism, naturism, totemism, fetishism, the taboo, and primitive ethics as religious phenomena, then to give a discussion of the culture-hero concept with a concrete original illustration of the same from a primitive tribe in America. It is rather unfortunate, considering our limitations, that before passing to a concrete presentation of what primitive religion actually is, we shall have to give attention to fallacious concepts regarding the life of primitive man in general. Unfortunately again, he who speaks of the philosophical concepts of the so-called savage must adopt an apologetic attitude by proving, if indeed he can, that the savage has any philosophy at all.

How surprising then it must seem to the uninformed to become aware for the first time, that in the conception of savage mankind the idea of evolution in nature, for instance, is an exceedingly old one. Quoting material presented by Dr. Kroeber, we find in Polynesian mythology, as an illustration, that a series of origins by birth is an explanation of cosmic features.[1] In Samoan, fire and water married and begat earth, rocks and trees. In Hawaiian mythology a protracted period of primeval night gave birth to eight periods which were literally

[1] A. L. Kroeber 'Inheritance by Magic,' *American Anthropologist*, vol. 18, No. 1 (1916).

born from each other. In the first, appeared worms, corals, shells, seaweed, kelp and grass; in the second, insects and birds; in the third, trees, jelly fish, fishes and whales; in the fourth, turtles and cultivable plants; in the fifth, pigs and human arts; in the sixth, mice and porpoises; in the seventh, visions, sound, thoughts and sayings; in the eighth, man. Among the California Indians, Solitude and Emptiness appeared first in the cosmic series; Being and Existence then found themselves there.

In American Indian mythologies, almost universally, the germ of the evolutionary scheme is apparent in the frequent reference to pre-existing times when men were animals and became transformed, through accidental stages, into their present-day form. One might safely say, indeed, that the idea of an out-and-out creation of matter is rather inconsistent with American Indian nature philosophy. The idea of a natural unfolding of stages of life is certainly the dominant one here. In fact, the human mind appears to have employed only two idea processes in explaining to itself the origin of the world, the idea of evolution and the idea of creation. Both are presumably derived from analogies of concrete events witnessed in nature: the process of birth and organic growth and the process of construction by human hands. So in the mythology of many savage peoples, the evolutionary idea of growth has equalled in strength that of absolute creation, and we have the apparent paradox that the savage is more scientific in his way of thinking about origins than is the civilized philosopher of more recent times. It required, as it seems, the influence of a Semitic people to turn the modern world's thought into thinking of creational origin. The primitive pattern of thought persists even into the more advanced religions, for there is a striking quasi-scientific tone in early Japanese Shinto mythology, in early Greek cosmogony, in the narratives

of the Australian aborigines, while even the Hindu concept of transmigration embodies a similar explanatory thought.

The ethnologist is moreover often obliged to claim dignified consideration for his field of research by bringing forth data showing how the concept of the magical, even the immaculate conception and birth of a culture hero, or of a mythical world-transformer, is an age-old concept in the primitive world, how the fulfilment of an altruistic mission during his life, and his final departure, with the promise of an ultimate return, all figure as episodes in the career of a mythical personage whose attributes may, in part, even be compared with those of Christ, Moses, Hercules, Achilles, Balder, and also, in places, with those of Barbarossa and Arthur of the Round Table. What could be more bewildering to the student than to find, for instance, in a typically indigenous set of American Indian myths, many elements which are cognate in substance with the episode of the disobedience of Eve, the world Flood, the Ark, and the like.

Not from the mythology of one American tribe, but from the traditions of many could be quoted specimen versions in which a disobedient virgin gives birth by magical impregnation to a being who at an early age develops the characteristics of a miracle-worker. Then, and after, in the same mythical hero-cycle, occur episodes which parallel in a crude but significant fashion the episodes of the more modern Messianic versions, if we may refer to the versions of Christianity and Hinduism in this category. We have the manifestation of altruism on the part of the hero personage in behalf of human beings, the destruction of existing monsters and personified evils, the transformation of objects in Nature by means of miraculous power, and, finally, most significantly, the departure of the hero to another world, after leaving his promise to return again in some future time of need to

benefit his people. Can anyone fail to stand and marvel before an array of evidence of this sort, testifying to the antiquity of the concept of the supernatural deliverer in the realm of primitive thought! We need not indeed halt our comparisons with these correlations. To every student of American Indian mythology instances of the occurrence in America of the following roughly assembled list of classical and old Testament mythical motives are very familiar. We have parallels for the narrative of Joshua stopping the course of the sun, Jonah and the whale, Lot's wife, the Potiphar story, Cain and Abel (or the murder between twins personifying good and evil), and the Flood. To cite a few instances from the classical field one might also mention correspondences in America with such tales as the animal foster-mother (Romulus and Remus), Pandora, Achilles, Orpheus, Prometheus (not only fire being obtained by theft in American mythology, but the sun, summer and tobacco among the tales of the eastern tribes), the world fire, Atlantis or Medea, and the Magic Flight, Phaeton, the Symplegades, and many more for which quotations might be cited from published American collections. Besides these, could be mentioned a number of correspondences with familiar European nursery tales, such as Jack and the Bean Stalk, the Abandoned Children, Big Claus and Little Claus, the Werwolf, the race between the hare and the tortoise, Loki, in Scandinavian, Tom Thumb, and the Roc. It is difficult to resist the temptation of discussing at this point whether, like Graebner and Ratzel, we may interpret the occurrence of these parallels as being due to an early process of culture diffusion or whether like Spencer, Tylor, Lubbock, Frazier and Lang, we are to repose confidence in the familiar theories of 'independent origin' and 'fundamental mental unity.' So much for what time permits us to mention regarding primitive man's philosophy of nature.

Savage religion is, to proceed to another topic, no less rich in forms of worship than in ideas of philosophy. Through a maze of practices in idolatry, human, animal and object sacrifice, cannibalism, invocation, expiation and bribery, we gain an insight into the attitude of worship of the savage, which might lead us, as it has some others, into the feeling that the worship of primitive man is the outgrowth of the emotion of fear. While fear is unquestionably an element in the religious activity of primitive man at large, I feel that it would be unfair to exclude from consideration instances evidencing higher feelings, such as those of gratitude, of reverence and affection for supernatural beings, occurring in the worship of some primitive peoples. Savage worship is at bottom characterized by emotions, so far as we know them, remarkably like those underlying modern worship. In the primitive tribe we find, moreover, the worshippers varying in the intensity of their devotional activities. Some are deeply religious most of the time, others are intermittently religious, and still others are indifferently religious. It is undoubtedly true, however, that, if we may assume the sense of an average feeling in respect to religion, the savage is in the long run rather more religious than the civilized man, for the former realizes his greater dependence upon the attitude which the supernatural beings maintain toward him than does the latter who has his sense of spiritual independence magnified by the knowledge of his mechanical powers.

The rites and forms of worship of primitive man often exhibit an elaborate and complex religious consciousness. Through prayers, through sacrifices, through emulatory dances and ritualized ceremonies, influence is sought with the supernatural beings. The rites of worship of primitive groups have often been regarded by speculators as activities to be classed in the very lowest nascent stages of human culture. While many of them

may be simple and irrational in concept, historically they must be as ancient and in many cases as much the product of specialized development as the modern types of religion. Cannibalism, for instance, might be casually thought, at first blush, to be a nascent activity. An investigation of cannibalism in the region of fetish worship in Central Africa shows on the contrary that this rite is the result of a long process, its inception capable of being traced back through acts of sacrifice to a starting point in the concept of expiation. Cannibal tribes frequently have derived their craving for human flesh through an earlier custom of eating, with ceremonial motives, the sacrifices intended for deities. In some of the most highly developed ritualistic regions of Africa such sacrifices consist of human beings. The connection here is obvious. Sacrifice in itself may be in accord with a deeply religious consciousness since it provides gifts, acceptable in proportion to their importance, to the supernatural beings. Cannibalism then may in some regions be viewed as an evolved rite.

In the primitive world ceremonies of a religious character play a part in most of the current events of life. Pre-natal and birth rites, ceremonial procedures at the period of adolescence, at initiation into certain secret organizations, at the occasions of marriage, death and burial, characterize the passage of life among savages from before the cradle until after the grave. Assuredly the savage impresses us as an essentially very religious creature in so far as his ceremonial obligations toward the beings of the supernatural world are concerned. The great play of fancy in such ceremonies, bringing into life symbolism in art, music and dancing, overshadows the crudities of superstition and the acts which would be considered profane and obscene in civilized communities.

It is not within the legitimate scope of this paper to deal extensively with the various theories of the origin of

religion, for although primitive religions may be said to be religions of an early type, there is nothing to warrant the critical student in going so far as to fall into the pitfall of assuming that even the crudest religions with which we are acquainted through ethnology are in any sense near to any truly original form of religious life. They are a comparatively late and advanced product of religious growth, with a complexity corresponding to that of Egyptian, early Semitic or Indian religion, which is developmental instead of primary. Having exonerated ourselves then from the thankless burden of dealing with religious origins, we may relieve our minds by attempting the legitimate and more profitable task of discussing the leading concepts which characterize the religions of primitive tribes, all of whom, in this age of the globe, have ascended to their own variously evolved states of being.

### ANIMISM

If any one concept could be regarded as fundamental to both primitive belief and religious practice it would seem to be that of animism. Animism is perhaps the most elementary and universal concept in primitive religious life. The term, while it does not necessarily define primitive religion in general, does at least temporarily characterize it. It is, as Tylor asserted many years ago,[2] the groundwork of the philosophy of religion from that of savages up to that of civilized man. The doctrine of animism as a concept of spirits may, to be sure, afford only a bare and meagre definition of religion at its minimum, but where the root is the branches will generally be produced. Tylor defines animism as including the belief in souls and in a future state, in controlling deities and subordinate spirits; these doctrines practically resulting in some kind of active worship.

[2] E. B. Tylor *Primitive Culture*, London (1903) vol. I.

Tylor and Jevons derived the animistic concept from the transitional character of beliefs regarding the soul (made conscious to the primitive mind through dreams), and those concerning supernatural spirits. The doctrine is based upon an assumption of primitive man's inability to distinguish the animate from the inanimate. Spencer modifies Tylor's original concept by denying the latter assumption, showing, by certain examples, that since animals can distinguish the animate from the inanimate it is an injustice to attribute a lower stage of discriminating intelligence to man. Durkheim again treats animism critically and recasts Tylor's and Spencer's later views by creating two categories of thought, *naturism,* which "addresses itself to the phenomena of nature, either the great cosmic forces, such as winds, rivers, stars or the sky, etc., or else the objects of various sorts which cover the surface of the earth, such as plants, animals, rocks, etc.," and *animism,* "which has spiritual beings as its object, spirits, souls, geniuses, demons, divinities, properly so-called, animated and conscious agents like men . . . . ordinarily not visible to human eyes." For some thinkers animism is the earlier phase of thought, naturism being a derived secondary form, and for others "the nature cult was the point of departure for religious evolution." So it appears, in regard to animism itself, as elementary and fundamental as the concept is as an original starting point for religious thought, that the several points of view concerning both its definition and its place in religious growth render the position of one who attempts to deal dogmatically with the animistic doctrine open to criticism until the contested questions have been settled.

Later researches, however, show animism to be more than the older conception embraced, that it is based on the concept of magical power believed to be inherent in the phenomena of nature whether animate or inanimate. A more recent characterization of animism has been given

by Doctor Boas. He says:[3] "The fundamental concept bearing on the religious life of the individual is the belief in the existence of magic power, which may influence the life of man and which in turn might be influenced by human activity. In this sense magic power must be understood as the wonderful qualities which are believed to exist in objects, animals, men, spirits and deities and which are superior to the natural qualities of man. This idea of magic power is one of the fundamental concepts which occur among all Indian tribes. It is what is called *manito* by the Algonquian tribes; *wakanda* by the Siouan tribes, *orenda* by the Iroquois." By acquiring varying degrees of this supernatural force the various deities believed in by the American Indians are thought to derive their power. Objects in nature which are conceived also to be imbued with some of this spiritual force also come to be classified, by the same means, as incipient deities. This stage, called the pre-animistic stage, in which rites are addressed to impersonal forces has been classed by some religious theorists as one of the earliest phases of human religion. Human beings who through the possession of magic power become able to impress their fellows with their ability to work miracles in healing disease or in controlling the action of spirits are likewise regarded as possessing some of this supernatural force. Hence, we find in all primitive groups individuals to whom are attributed supernatural powers who are known as medicine men, magicians, witch-doctors or, more technically, as Shamans. Shamanism then may be said to be a practise based on the use of supernatural force.

### TOTEMISM

Totemism has, like animism, figured prominently in the classification of elementary religious concepts. A

[3] Article 'Religion,' *Handbook of The American Indians,* Bulletin 30, Bureau of American Ethnology.

better understanding of the great diversity of totemic phenomena in various parts of the world has left students today in a more critical frame of mind, with a less definite feeling as to what totemism really is than they had a decade ago. Tylor, Morgan, Hill-Tout, Robertson Smith, Haddon, Frazer, Lang, McLennan and Durkheim have within the last thirty years elaborated various explanatory theories which, on account of their attempted universal application, have been superseded in more recent years by those of Boas, Goldenweiser, Rivers, and other philosophers whose method has been more inductive.

Goldenweiser, allowing for the cases, which are encountered frequently, where the religious side of the totemic complex is nothing, ventures the definition: "Totemism is the tendency of definite social units (bound together through descent) to become associated with objects and symbols of emotional value." [4]

Totemism implies the association of so many cultural traits which are not strictly concerned with religion that it never embraces the whole of religion, even when, as in the case of Polynesia, it has developed into a type of religion. For instance, in various regions of the globe we find the concept more characteristically based on the association of social units with belief in descent, taboo, dramatization of myths, ceremonies to multiply the totemic animal, with prerogatives in the ownership of myths, songs, dances, family crests, and the like. Most commonly associated with totemism, however, is exogamy. This is the prohibition of marriage within certain social divisions whose members regard themselves as relatives through maternal or paternal descent, as the case may be, from a common ancestor generally of the animal or plant kingdom. The explanation of this identity of social group and animal has been attempted by theorists in

[4] A. A. Goldenweiser, 'Totemism, an Analytical Study,' *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. 23, No. 88 (1916), p. 275.

several ways. For instance, Haddon believed that totemism originated from the idea that groups of people developed out of an earlier stage of their life when certain animals were hunted for food, into an attitude of reverence toward the creature and so came to abstain from killing or eating it. Frazer in a later work suggested that the institution originated in an economic arrangement by which the various clans contributed to each other's support by refraining from killing certain animals in order to multiply each other's game supply, and consequently developing a certain religious attitude toward the animal so protected. And there are other theories.

The concept is much too varied to accept any of these theories, none of which reconstructs any absolutely satisfactory universal theory of origin. The best recent authorities show that totemism must have started from many different origins in different regions and developed certain comparable characteristics through a process of convergence. It would be unwise, even if it were possible in this paper, to discuss further the question of the origin of totemism, and it seems inadvisable to prolong a discussion of the religious side of so complex and subjective a concept.

### FETISHISM

The belief that all things in Nature are animate and that they possess volition, immortality and other mysterious attributes has developed in the mind of primitive man an attitude of reverence and worship which students of religion denote by the term fetishism, a derivative from the Portuguese feitiço, a charm, sorcery. Fetishism is the doctrine that objects, either natural or artificial, possess an essential magical power which converts them into creatures capable of responding to acts of influence such as invocation, sacrifice, flattery, bribery, supplication, imitative magic and the like. Accordingly, various objects in Nature, which appeal to the imagination of

superstitious human beings either by their curious appearance, it may be through dreams or visions, or through supposedly supernatural associations, become regarded as abodes of such *animæ*. Such objects are cherished as material helpers, guides or protectors, or are held in fear as malevolent forces which have to be appeased by the various means of cajolery which man since time immemorial has known and practiced to deceive supernatural beings in his own favor. Fetishes may be acquired by individuals, by groups, or by nations for the promotion of their welfare. Fetishes may be small portable objects of every imaginable sort, or they may occur as artificial objects made with every device of ingenuity and art that man is capable of employing. In the former class we learn of such fetishes as bones, stones, fossils, feathers, sticks plain or decorated, hair, roots, berries, seeds, parts of animals and human beings, in fact anything, no matter how insignificant in itself, which has in the owner's mind at least some symbolic connection with occult power. Such minor fetishes are frequently known as charms, amulets, talismans, and luck-pieces. And indeed we of to-day have not entirely outgrown their use. Fetishes are often large and elaborate artifacts, representations or images which have become generally known as idols. The phenomenon of idolatry or image worship is thus a close associate of fetishism and so, also, is sacrifice. Africa is generally regarded as the region of the globe where fetishism has been most elaborately developed. Here it constitutes the greater part of religion, its devotees being organized into many fetish cults whose power is often of a political as well as of a religious nature.[5]

### TABOO

Another manifestation of the primitive religious complex is taboo, a word of Polynesian origin. The term is

[5] R. H. Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa*, N. Y., 1904.

applied to an interdiction belonging to or placed upon a person, place, day, name, act, thought or any conceivable thing and idea which is thereby rendered sacred. In the case of objects, communication with the tabooed thing is forbidden under ordinary circumstances to all except a few persons having special privileges. Taboo may have a negative and a positive side; the former, denoting religious prohibition, is the more conspicuous in primitive life. In either aspect the term may be applied to definite periods of the life of the individual in connection with important events. It operates by governing the regulations observed by boys and girls at puberty; by parents before and after the birth of a child (*couvade*); by relatives after the decease of a person; by hunters and fishermen in their occupations; by shamans, doctors, or magicians desiring power to cure the sick, to prophesy or to conjure; and by novices about to enter secret societies. Such are only a few of the instances where taboo operates. The typical negative prohibitions which every student first associates with the taboo proper, however, consist in abstinence from hunting, fishing, war, women, sleep, certain kinds of work, and so forth, but especially in refraining from eating certain foods. The latter prohibition may be applied permanently in the life of an individual or a group in regard to the totemic animal, and it often applies similarly to the killing of certain animals. In primitive society the taboo of name mention and the taboo of intercourse are very common. The prohibition frequently covers the mention of the name of the dead, the mention of one's own name, the right of addressing the mother-in-law directly or vice versa, and the prohibition of intercourse between fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law as well.

Thus it may be seen that taboo is an important aspect of the phenomena of religion, influencing primitive ethical and social behaviour in general to an extent that makes

it in some regions as broad a concept as that of religion itself. In Polynesia, particularly, the taboo was largely a method of government and the fear of retribution from supernatural sources was the direct cause of obedience to it.

### PRIMITIVE ETHICS

Thus far in our discussion it must have been apparent to all that the question of the moral influence of religion upon primitive life has been left unmentioned. The reason for this is that we are dealing with primitive, not with civilized religions. The ethical characteristics of primitive man's religion are indeed as diverse in their types as are the ethnical types themselves. If, however, we separate, by a somewhat arbitrary line of division, the sphere of primitive life from that of civilized life, we find that in the primitive world relationship with the supernatural beings does not seem to involve the consideration of morals in the least. In the religious systems prevailing throughout primitive America, Asia, Africa, and Australia there occur very few signs to indicate a belief in retribution during the soul's future life, for the deeds done in this life. As ubiquitous as the belief in a heaven of some sort may be in the primitive world at large, the absence of the concept of reward and punishment for behavior during life leaves the matter of ethical control entirely outside the pale of religion. Custom is thus left to control community as well as individual behavior. One could indeed define most primitive types of religion as being ceremonial systems of non-ethical philosophy and worship. This is a very thorough-going differential feature. It throws into glaring contrast the primitive as against the more advanced Messianic types of religion, and again leaves us to struggle with a theory as to whether the Messiah concept would have been produced independently by a process of gradual thought evo-

lution or whether it is to be accounted for by the hypothesis of supernatural revelation.

We do indeed find instances in the primitive world of the concept of sin, but sin is in such cases merely the violation of a taboo or an arbitrary custom, finding its settlement in an immediate reaction by the community or by the performance of a ceremony of expiation intended to placate the supernatural force which has been offended. It is only among the Eskimo that any ceremonial atonement comparable to that of modern religions is required for a sin, and atonement there curiously enough is obtained by confession addressed to an anthropomorphic goddess, the Mistress of the Sea Mammals. In the case of these people there exist a number of arbitrary restrictions the transgression and subsequent concealment of which constitute sin. Such restrictions concern food and work. It is, for example, a transgression to perform certain work after a seal has been killed, or after a death has occurred; no work on caribou skin is allowed until sea ice has formed, and none on seal skins after the sea ice has commenced to melt. An elaborate code of social punishment also exists in primitive Africa where a highly organized system of legislation is, and has been for ages, in operation, though as a social-economic not a religious element of culture. Here again is something of a paradox in the fact that the savage is a creature of social self-control more strictly than is the civilized man who requires belief in a religious code threatening eternal punishment or reward for the maintenance of his good behavior.

There remains, accordingly, the impression in the mind of every thinker who studies the relationship between ethics and religion, that a tremendous gap lies between the primitive and the modern types of religion. Even allowing for great diversities in primitive tribal religions it may be generally asserted as true that the primitive

types are characteristically not ethical, since their systems do not embody ethical codes. Apparently this is due to the fact that the savage's conception of the superior beings rates them as too important, too egoistic to be concerned at all with what good or bad men may do to each other. This lack of association between religion and the control of behavior in life is so marked that we may generally regard the gap as the dividing line between the primitive and the advanced. Classifying the primitive types as non-ethical, non-retributive systems of philosophy we might attempt to account for the reason why the modern creeds instigated by Messianic personages, such as Moses, Christ, Mohammed or Buddha, bring the doctrines of religion to bear upon life as a moral power. Coördinating results in these speculations, it would seem that where primitive religions are strictly non-ethical the Messiah concept is also lacking. Should one attempt to claim that the culture hero or transformer might in the process of time have developed into a Messiah-personage, he would have to confront the difficulty of explaining why field investigations among savages have failed to disclose evidences to show where culture heroes, shamans or semi-supernatural figures have metamorphosed directly into such Messiah-personages. The chief function of the Messiah being, as we have seen, to preach the doctrine of ethics as a part of religion, we cannot point to cases where a culture hero or mythical transformer does appear in any such capacity. The problem still remains, however, whether or not this conclusion may be due to lack of information from certain regions of the primitive world and whether future research will bring forth material showing how the primitive concept could develop into the concept of a Messiah. We must be content as yet with investigating the field to secure material covering the gaps of our knowledge

before we can hope to draw safe conclusions on a problem so greatly involving the comprehension of primitive man's history, as well as an understanding of his mind.

### THE CULTURE HERO

The culture hero or transformer concept, which has already been frequently mentioned, is another concept as fundamental in the primitive world as that of animism. Particularly in America, where we have critical and abundant material collected from many regions, can the culture hero character be studied with advantage, so we shall use this field for drawing some concrete illustrations. The story of the so-called culture hero who gave the world its present shape, killing obnoxious monsters, giving man the arts and industries of his culture, is one of the most widely distributed myth-cycles on the continent. The culture hero or transformer, if we choose to call him such, appears first in a period when men are not differentiated from animals. With the appearance of the hero a new historic era is ushered in and we have the story of how men are given their culture and separated from their animal kindred. The transformer teaches men how to kill animals, to make fire and to clothe themselves, posing as a benevolent helper of mankind. But the same culture hero often appears in other groups of tales as a sly, low-principled trickster, even a marplot who vainglorioously thinks himself superior to all other beings whom he tries to deceive. Again, in the words of Boas,[6] "he appears as the victim of his own wiles who is often punished for his malevolence by the superiority of his intended victims. No method of warfare is too mean for him. No trick is too low to be resorted to provided it helps him to reach his selfish end. Often the end sought for is entirely unworthy of the hero who

[6] Introduction to "Traditions of the Thompson River Indians," James Teit, *Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society.*

shows such lofty altruism at other times in his career, for his chief aim in his baser moods is the acquisition of riches and women."

It seems difficult to harmonize two such different aspects of the culture hero myth. Some investigators have tried to show that a gradual deterioration from a purer, earlier form of the myth explains how the more vulgar tales come in as additions to the old cycle of myths. An explanation, however, which does not necessarily involve the idea of literary degeneration would seem to be natural, an explanation by which the speculator would account for the dual aspect of the culture hero concept by some process of evolution. To my mind we may seek for such an explanation by regarding the base and vulgar aspects of the culture-hero stories as accretions which have grown up around the central figure of mythology, like stories clustering around a point of attraction. In many of the tales where the culture hero frames his actions for the benefit of mankind he is not prompted by altruistic motives but only by the desire to satisfy his own needs. Nevertheless, these tales are often interpreted as indications of an altruistic intention on the part of the hero. The latter attitude, however, does not obscure the purely egotistical motives which the hero possesses, because many of the changes which he accomplishes for the benefit of mankind are only incidentally beneficial. The less the altruistic idea is developed the less will be the consciousness of a discrepancy between the tales representing the transformer as a benefactor and as a trickster. The higher it is developed the greater will be the discrepancy between these two groups of tales. Accordingly, we find that where the altruistic idea is emphasized the tales of the trickster are separated from the transformer tales and ascribed to another secondary hero. The personage of the hero character is then split into several parts, the one representing the high-principled

hero, the other retaining the basic features of the trickster cycle. The higher the civilization of the tribe, naturally the sharper the line seems to be drawn between the culture hero and the trickster.

Since there is a certain advantage in being able to refer to a specific case on this point, I should like to summarize from material gathered by myself, with which I am consequently more familiar, namely, the characteristics of the culture-hero tale as it is related by one of the tribes of the lower St. Lawrence region, the Penobscot Indians of northern Maine.[7] Bearing upon the discussion just presented the points to be noted here are, the commingling of altruism with selfishness, and secondly the importance of mere accident in determining the character of transformations in nature. To the Penobscot mind, it would seem, the incongruity of the various parts of the transformer myth has not been very striking, although there is a tendency manifested in this direction, in the separation of the myths into a primary and a secondary, profane, group by the native narrators.

The culture hero, in the tales of the tribes of this region, bears the name of *Gluskábe* which, literally translated, means 'The Man of Deceit,' 'The Liar.' The term, however, is not applied in a derogatory sense for it implies 'one who overcomes his opponents by strategy.' The sections following under separate numbers are abstracts of independent recitations in the order as given, forming the culture-hero cycle of myths.

### Summary of the Penobscot Version of the Culture-hero (Gluskábe) Cycle.

1. Gluskábe's Childhood. He lives with grandmother, Woodchuck. He develops into a prodigious hunter as a

[7] The summary presented here is arranged from part of a collection of phonetically recorded texts with translations submitted by the writer several years ago to the Anthropological Division of the Geological Survey of Canada.

child. His grandmother prophesies a great future for him as the benefactor of posterity.

2. Gluskábe deceives the Game Animals. He induces them to enter his game bag by lying to them, prophesying the end of the world. His grandmother disapproves. Gluskábe releases the animals from the game close.

3. Gluskábe traps all the fish by a similar hoax. His grandmother reprimands him, and Gluskábe releases the fish.

4. Gluskábe employs a stone canoe. He seeks the home of the Wind Bird. His hair is blown off by the force of the wind. He deceives the Wind Bird, and cripples him. The waters then become too calm, Gluskábe is obliged to cure and restore Wind Bird, who properly regulates the winds of the world thereafter.

5. Gluskábe seeks Grasshopper, the retainer of the world's tobacco. He steals his tobacco and seeds, bestows it abroad for mankind, and punishes Grasshopper by giving him only a temporary supply.

6. Gluskábe travels among the lakes and rivers of the north, reducing their dangers for the safety of posterity.

7. Gluskábe discovers people suffering from thirst. He seeks the monster *Aglebému* who withholds the world's water, and kills him. Then from the released water originates the Penobscot River, and the dying people, plunging into the flood, are transformed into various fish and amphibians. From these originate the present day family totemic groups.

8. Gluskábe pursues a monster cannibal moose. Squatty-woman (*Pukdjinskwess*) attempts to hinder him. He escapes her. Their snowshoe footprints become imprinted in the rock. Gluskábe kills the moose. He transforms the moose's intestines, and his own dog into stone, and also his kettle, which is now Mt. Kineo.

9. Gluskábe goes in search of the Winter Deity. He is overcome and frozen by Winter.

10. Gluskábe's grandmother, during his absence, is plagued by Foxes. Gluskábe returns, and punishes them.

11. Gluskábe seeks the source of Summer. He hides his eye leaving it in the care of the Chickadee. He encounters his father and his malevolent brothers. He undergoes a smoking test, and a gaming test, and wins both.

12. Gluskábe approaches the dancers who guard the Summer Fluid. He transforms two girls into toads. He steals the Summer Fluid, and escapes his pursuers by a ruse. He recovers an eye from Owl, who has stolen his. He then proceeds to the home of the Winter Deity with the Summer Fluid, and overcomes him by the heat.

13. Gluskábe finishes his earthly mission. With his grandmother he departs to the immortal realm where they work, preparing weapons for the future world war, to aid posterity.

The following three episodes are told in detached form as supplements to the story of the hero's career. They are correctly felt, in the minds of the native myth narrators, to be incongruous with the character of the main transformer episodes.

14. Gluskábe fails to stop a Baby crying. He is defeated by the Baby in a filth-eating contest.

15. Gluskábe aids his uncle Turtle to secure women. Turtle projects part of himself beneath the river: this portion is swallowed by a fish. Gluskábe recovers it for him.

16. Gluskábe aids Turtle to marry the daughter of *Kellu,* a bird chief. At the wedding-feast Turtle violates Gluskábe's rules and is scorched in the fire, whence originates the Turtle's shell. Turtle tries vengeance on Gluskábe. Gluskábe in payment causes Turtle to stab himself.

It seems advisable, in connection with tales like the preceding, since the question often arises among students

of primitive religion, to mention a common fallacy which has come into vogue in literature concerning the supposed belief of an anthropomorphic supreme deity among the American Indians. The Indians are often cited as illustrating the case of a primitive people paying reverence to a Great Spirit as a creator and controller of the world. No such monotheistic concept, however, does exist in aboriginal Indian religious beliefs in general, until the concept has been taught the natives by the missionaries. The zeal of the latter has often led them to "read in" their own ideas into their records, with the result that the great supernatural force, and oftentimes the mythical culture-hero figures, like the one just dealt with, have been misconstrued through the bias of the investigator. We should not overlook the fact, however, that the missionaries have correctly understood the situation when they have claimed that the primitive Americans possessed a consciousness of the life after death. The soul of the individual, in American mythology, is generally supposed to travel to a spirit land resembling ours. The journey thither is believed to be beset with many lurking dangers to be overcome by the soul. In some mythologies a slippery log has to be crossed, in others terrific precipices must be skirted, while in others we learn of colliding clouds which are to be avoided. The success of the soul in this journey depends largely upon good fortune, sometimes upon the strength of experience gained by having led a respectable life on earth, and sometimes upon the performance of mortuary rites by the surviving relatives. As describing the realm of departed spirits, the term "Happy Hunting Ground" seems to have been fairly well chosen. Life there is believed to be one of happiness and repletion.

The treatment of so complex a realm of thought has really no natural ending, as the student will learn for

himself if he undertakes to penetrate the literature of it. An arbitrary ending has to be made somewhere. There is, moreover, no single textbook to be used with implicit confidence as a guide. So until the time comes when scholars in the field of primitive religions, through intensive methods similar to those employed in classical and Semitic research, produce an adequate text and reference work, the few who stand before the panorama of the savage world can, I fear, do little more than surrender to the spectacle of its possibilities.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The beginner in this subject is recommended to consult W. I. Thomas, *Source Book for Social Origins* (University of Chicago Press), Part VI (Magic, Religion, Myth). An extensive bibliography of primitive religions is given here. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. 2, is valuable for general material and E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, translated from the French by J. W. Swain, is useful for the more theoretical treatment of the whole field.

# CHAPTER II

## THE EGYPTIAN RELIGION

BY W. MAX MÜLLER

MANY of my readers will feel that it means an injustice to the ancient Egyptians, the bearers of the highest civilization of the ancient Orient, to introduce their religion directly after the sketch of the religious thinking of primitive peoples. I am sorry to confess that I cannot join any protest of these admirers of ancient Egypt. While I gladly agree with them in praising highly the art, the literature, the architecture, and many other achievements of this remarkable nation, I must state that the popular overestimation of its "religious wisdom" is a great error. Certainly its religious thought is extremely interesting to students of the history of religion, who may see in it even the most precious bequest of ancient Egypt to modern science.

This valuation rests, however, not on its philosophical depths, as so many admirers of Egypt think, but on the extremely primitive character of that ancient religion which makes it an inestimable source of information for the origin and growth of religion in general. It is an interesting link between the most rudimentary state of religious thinking and the development reached by other nations of the ancient western Orient. Whoever thinks that this skeptical valuation is incompatible with the high civilization of Egypt, may be reminded that the religious development of nations is often quite incongruous with their progress in other lines. Compare the low religious development of China, while, on the other hand, Israel, which could boast only of a very moderate and little original civilization before the dispersion among the

nations, has been the leader of the whole world in religious thought.

Furthermore, if conservatism is a most important element in all religions, it is nowhere so important as in ancient Egypt. Its creed is not what the highly civilized Egyptians after 3000 B.C. might have thought out if they had been free to think. It is rather the bequest of their barbarous forefathers from fabulously ancient periods. These traditions of the ancestors, who must have lived at the time when the gods walked on earth or who were even gods themselves, seemed so venerable to later generations that they did not dare to change them much. Thus extremely primitive ideas are dragged along to the very end of heathenism in Egypt, exactly as the art of the Nile-land carried the fetters of tradition from the age of the earliest, childish beginnings, as the official costume even of the latest Pharaohs showed that it dated from a time when the Egyptians were more or less completely naked. If it seemed sinful to change such things, how much more necessary seemed it to the priests to worship the same gods and in the same way as the blessed forefathers had done, perhaps back to 10,000 B.C., a time which the modern archæologist must divest of all romantic ideas and consider as an age of complete barbarism.

The older school of Egyptology was very reluctant to admit this low valuation of a religion which the classical world had viewed with so much interest and respect. Instead of recognizing its crude character, scholars clung to isolated statements of some priestly writers which showed (or seemed to show) a tendency towards pantheism or even monotheism. Emphasizing and generalizing these passages, they came to the conclusion that the Egyptians, or at least the earliest Egyptians, were great thinkers, believing in a pantheistic monotheism which they only hid under the symbols of polytheism. That the later Egyptians, indeed, misunderstood this symbolism very

much, some of these apologists used to admit; above all they claimed the meaning of the sacred animals was forgotten in later ages and those divine symbols were misunderstood as divine personalities in themselves. And so they maintained, we must not follow later misinterpretations of the ignorant masses, we must look at the pure, original creed as preserved in those isolated passages; if ever we should find religious texts from a sufficiently old time we should find there the pure solar or pantheistic monotheism which befitted such a high civilization.

These apologetic theories had their day as long as Egyptologists had no fuller religious texts from the time before 2000 B.C. They became more and more difficult when such texts were found, revealing not a simpler religion but all those characteristics which had been excused as later degenerations. The decisive blow was dealt to that apologetic school when in the winter of 1880–81 the opening of the inscribed pyramids of Dynasties 5 and 6 furnished to scholars an immense mass of religious texts engraved about 2500 B.C., but taken from so much older books that even scholars of the pyramid-age understood them only imperfectly. We may safely consider them as the representation of the religious beliefs of the fourth, partly, it may be, even of the fifth millennium B.C. In this rich material we found nothing of monotheism, but we met with all those objectionable sides of the Egyptian religion which its apologists had tried to excuse as later degenerations. The objectionable worship of animals proved to be a very prominent part of this earliest phase of religion, and instead of finding a smaller and more systematized number of gods, we discovered hundreds of new deities, mostly of a very meaningless character. In one word: the crude superstitions of the masses in later time have proved to be the faithful survival of the oldest religious traditions, while the few passages which may be adduced as a proof of higher religious speculations

belong only to much later periods and represent the isolated efforts of a few thinkers among the most learned priests, efforts which can less be treated as the religion of Egypt than the writings of some radical philosophers of our age may claim to represent Christianity. Thus the view is winning more and more ground that the endless, unsystematic and confused polytheism of the earliest Egyptians can be understood only as a development from animism (as first had been proposed by R. Pietschmann in 1878). The difficult and obscure character of Egyptian religion is due to the fact that it hovered forever between the animistic and the cosmic stage. Even in prehistoric time elements of the latter development had been mingled with the more primitive traditions, but they could never sufficiently modify them. The modern scholars, therefore, found signs of a cosmic conception of religion, but in applying it to the pantheon it was impossible for them to discover a harmonious cosmic system. And so this transitional character of the religion of Egypt is the reason that we have such widely divergent views on it in modern books.

We assume that the prehistoric Egyptians, when they began to make the first feeble progress towards civilization, were on the same basis as that on which we find many savage tribes of Africa. This most primitive stage of animism lacks a clear conception of what we should call gods. It considers the whole world filled with spirits some roaming freely about, some sedentary, some big and powerful, some rather insignificant. They appear, rather as transient incarnations than as permanent souls, in men or in animals, the more sedentary spirits also in trees, rocks or other objects. Disappearing from living creatures, at the time when the possession of these ends or at their death, they lead over to the idea that all souls of the defunct are such ghosts; however, neither the pure cult of ancestors nor the Indian transmigration theories

ever developed in Egypt. It is difficult to draw the line betwen the evil and the good ghosts. Primitive men holding the animistic theory live in constant fear of all ghosts and try to be on good terms with them all. That wish leads so easily to magical customs for winning or warding off the spirits that many modern scholars believe magic an inseparable part of all animistic religions. Fetishism is merely a specially characteristic representative of this magical development of animism.

The primitive Egyptians thus once had endless gods, if we may call them gods. The more the inhabitants of Egypt settled down and became agricultural, the more they paid attention to the local spirits. Originally every settlement seems to have had at least one local spirit which it worshiped exclusively by sacrifices and magical ceremonies, not asking what its relation to the spirits of the neighboring village or town was, much less its relation to nature. Many of these cults survived in historical time without change and often also the various taboos attached to them. Sun, moon, stars, etc., probably were considered to have souls and may have been recognized as divine but seem to have found very little worship in earliest time. Perhaps the town spirit (or spirits) seemed nearer to men and more interested in them than those immovable phenomena of nature. Thus, the great majority of the old local gods of Egypt had no cosmical meaning at all, or where such a meaning was given to them we can easily see that it had been developed only later and mostly very unsuccessfully. The many contradictions in those cosmical explanations betray this. Such local gods also rarely have any mythology attached to them, because mythology needs a cosmic basis. The best proof of the animistic origin of the local cults is that the majority of their gods have animal form. No theories of fear or of utility explain these forms; and while terrible animals like the lion and crocodile or the strong bull and

the mysterious serpent appear frequently, we find also the little shrewmouse, the frog, the dung-beetle, small fish and birds, etc., as gods. Where the animal worship had been preserved in its primitive form, the later Egyptians connected the sacred animal with the supernatural world by explaining it as possessed by a divine spirit. These later theologians, living in the age of cosmic religion, expounded that spirit as having come from heaven, incarnating some great celestial god. The famous Apis bull of Memphis was explained as the incarnation of the sun, of the moon, of the many-sided god Osiris, of the neighboring local gods Sokaris and Ptah. These contradictions, which we find quite analogously in the case of other sacred animals, betray that these animals originally were independent from all celestial ideas; only the incarnation of some unusual ghost is a good remnant of the original view, betraying clearly the most primitive animism. The extension of the sacredness from one divine animal to the whole species (*e.g.*, in the case of the cat) is mostly a later development, although some old local taboos on animals may allow us to infer it also for the primitive period.

In historic time the condition of a tutelary spirit for every village or, perhaps, even every house, cannot be found, but at least every town has its local god. This still leaves several hundred local gods whom we find on the monuments as actually worshiped, thousands of other gods (or 'souls,' as, significantly, all gods, great and small, are often called) are admitted to exist but have no cult. These more or less 'unknown gods' are, evidently, the local gods of smaller communities. The village god with a straw hut as chapel could not compete with the town god with his stately temple and rich priesthood, which attracted the villagers so much that they set up a shrine of the 'great god' in their settlement and then neglected or even in time forgot the old local di-

vinity. We can trace to a certain extent how the local ghost of a small village or town may, along with the increasing population and power of that settlement, grow into a 'great god' and eventually into a god of the king so that he consequently was worshiped over all Egypt and placed at the head of the whole pantheon. To preserve the worship of lesser gods they were, from very old times, united with greater gods. Thus many triads arose, exactly as in Babylonia. Usually the triad consisted of father, mother and son (never daughter), more rarely of a god with two wives. The famous ennead of Heliopolis seems to signify a looser company of gods forming a triple triad. Great goddesses associating with a male god made him their son.

While we find many gods (or at least their names) lost by assimilation with more important divinities, the process of dissimilation is very rare. One of the few examples is the local dissimilation of Min(u) of Koptos into the younger Amon of Thebes. This latter god illustrates also that development described above, from an obscure god of a small town to the highest god of Egypt, who even subsequently remained great, while other gods had only temporarily a wider reaching importance.

However, even before the beginning of historic time, the tendency began to develop in Egypt, be it by progress of thought or through foreign influences, to remove the gods from the narrow, local sphere to heaven or to make them cosmic. But this tendency never was carried through as successfully and systematically as in Babylonia. Sun, moon and stars may have been the factors connecting the old gods with heaven.

Characteristic of Egypt is the prominence given to the sun-god which dominated all other gods in a way hardly known in any other country. Many theories are attached to him. He is described as a god in human form walking over the celestial roads; the sun is his face or eye or

head-ornament or the royal serpent wound around his forehead. Or he sails in a ship over the blue heavenly ocean, rowing himself or the sundisk as passenger or he is rowed by divine sailors, that is by the stars who become his crew in daytime. The sundisk may then be in the cabin or as a fiery serpent may wind itself around the prow. Very early the hawk-god Horus became solar; this led to the explanation of the sun as a hawk flying across the sky and to a blending with the older, human, form Rê', who becomes likewise a hawk sitting in the ship of the sun, or at least a hawk-headed man. Also a beetle-shaped god Khepri became at an early time solar and thus the sun was explained as a scarab rolling its egg across the sky. The ichneumon god Atum(u) of Heliopolis, however, had to assume human form at his solarization. To harmonize these various forms and names later theology teaches that Rê' is the general name, Hor(us) that of the rising, Atum(u) that of the descending sun, Khepri the sun below the horizon as dead (like Osiris) or as rising or as the embryonic sun-god preparing to rise. Also the name Shu especially at noontime occurs, and also other names (Khnumu, on which see below, Euf, etc.), for the nocturnal sun in the lower world. Later many other gods were solarized. Because the words 'eye' and 'serpent' are feminine, an endless number of goddesses were also explained as female forms of the sun and called the eye, crown, or daughter of the sun-god. These female explanations, however, never became popular; the prevailing theory remained that the sun-god was masculine. The myth explaining why the sun-god has only one eye, a myth which has wandered far in the world's mythology, occurs in various forms. The lost eye dropped into the depths of the ocean; how it was recovered thence is told in many varying Egyptian myths.

The moon, the most prominent personality of the

Babylonian pantheon, found remarkably little respect in Egypt, although identified with the ibis-god Thout(i), he became also the god of wisdom, of chronology (because the lunar year is most obvious to primitive man) and of letters, the secretary of the gods and their physician, who heals the sun's eye when it is torn out or damaged. Later he had also the form of the baboon ascribed to him. Only a few minor deities, like Khons(u) of Thebes, became lunar.

Neither have the planets as important a part as we should expect. Originally all were treated as manifestations of the heavenly good Horus, *i.e.*, they were not clearly distinguished. The morning star was known only as masculine, as the husband of the greatest fixed star, the dog star (Sothis). The constellations were different from those of the Babylonians, except that Orion represented also in Egypt the celestial hero, and therefore often was identified with the conqueror Horus. The Great Dipper was his adversary, the ship Argo held the dead or the infant Osiris, and the Pleiades seem to have been the constellation of fate ('the seven Hat-hors'). The Babylonian zodiacal constellations became known only in very late time; originally 36 so-called decan stars held their place, dividing the year into 36 weeks of ten days (the remaining last five days of the year forming a half decade of special sacredness). The Milky Way does not seem to have played any part in mythology. While late Egyptian astronomy shows clear Babylonian influences, these are very feeble in earlier time.

The sky originally seems to have been depicted as a black (*i.e.*, according to Oriental notions blue) bull, exactly as in Asia, but soon it assumed feminine gender, according to the Egyptian word for it. The heavenly cow, between the horns of which the sun-god shows himself, was early identified with an old cow-goddess, Hathor. She assumed later the character of the Asiatic queen

of heaven, becoming mistress of love, joy, music, finery, etc., and the names of many other Egyptian goddesses were connected with her. Heaven at night-time was, in earlier time, mostly understood as a tree rising at evening-time from the ocean; the stars were its leaves or fruits or represented the gods dwelling and moving in it. This starry tree allows man to read both the past and the future (therefore the goddess of fate, who sits in the depths of the sky writing the fate of the whole world, is connected with it). It also gives eternal life in its fruit to the gods who eat it every day, and also to the souls of the dead who approach this tree in the lower or the higher regions. The celestial tree can also be double, symbolizing morning and evening, the summer and winter solstice, etc. As the sun rises from the tree at morning and hides itself in it at evening, the tree can also be understood as a goddess and thus is only another form of the cow Hat-hor, or of Nut, who in woman's form bends over the earth begetting with this consort the sun as her child anew every night as she had begotten him at the creation of the world. At evening her child returns into her bosom or mouth re-begetting himself. While thus the sky is understood as the star-beset body of the heavenly goddess at night or as her blue hair at daytime, we find it also explained as water, the heavenly ocean forming a continuation of the ocean which flows around and under the earth or of the Nile. At the same time it is also a metal roof and thunder is the resounding of this immense sheet of metal from which the meteorites fall as chips and from which the similar ore below is derived. All these theories are boldly harmonized so that, for example, the heavenly cow is held to consist of water and the heavenly ocean to flow over the metal roof. The aether or empty space between sky and earth is identified with the god Shu, whose strong arms uphold the sky-goddess or at the creation separated her from her consort, the earth.

Shu, however, was originally a lion god; he was first understood as a form of the sun, then as solar ruler of the sky or as the sky himself, so that we see that his rôle as the aether was a secondary differentiation of the last-mentioned development. His sister and wife, the lioness Tefênet, confirms this development, because she retained the character of a female sun, *i.e.,* the eye or daughter of the heavenly god.

The earth-god (Qéb or Géb), the husband of the sky, is thought of as a man stretched on his back; all vegetation grows from his flesh. A later theological etymology then makes him a *gander,* the great cackler who lays the sun-egg at night and cackles over it. An earlier form of the earth-god was Aker(u), a double-faced lion; one mouth swallows up the sun-god at evening and the other mouth spits him out in the morning. Later theologians distinguished him as the depth of the earth from Qéb. The prevailing idea of the sun's origin is, however, that he was born or begat himself, proceeding from the oldest of all gods, Nun, the ocean, or, more particularly, the abyss into which the sun still sinks every night. This wise father of the sun and of all gods shows that the cosmogony deriving the whole world from the chaotic primeval waters and recognizing the sunlight as the cause of all organic life and of the present order of the world, belongs to the earliest results of human thought. The Egyptian mind, however, did not always distinguish the great ocean from the local ocean, the beneficent Nile, the father of all fatness, or from the local god who presided over the extreme south, the ram-shaped cataract god Khnum(u), because the source of the Nile (single, or double, *i.e.*, representing the Egyptian and the Ethiopic Nile, or quadruple, *i.e.*, the four sources representing the water system of the world in so many mythologies of other nations) was placed at the first cataract and was connected with the abyss. Likewise, the Osiris myth led

to two contradictory explanations of the ocean and its smaller counterpart streaming from the cataract.

We thus find an extremely rich mythology attached to the forces of nature in a way which betrays a long development of struggling speculations. That these could not be successfully harmonized and not even systematized as far as in most mythologies of Western Asia, was not felt to be a great disadvantage. All mythologies have somewhat a kaleidoscopic character; the ancients considered this as attractive and did not worry over contradictions as much as the children of more rationalistic ages. That the kaleidoscopic features are so very prominent in Egypt was less caused by lack of systematic sense in the Egyptian mind than by its over-conservative clinging to the old local gods of the forefathers. Originally destitute of all cosmic meaning and all mythology, as we have said above, those old pictures, fetishes and sacred animals admitted various interpretations. Thus it became possible that the theories of the later cosmic conception of religion were attached to different local names. The priests were so very reluctant to admit that another god than the one of their own town held some important function in nature (especially the embodiment in the sun and the rule over the sky), that many competing explanations were never or only incompletely reconciled.

A great part of the pantheon never could be adapted to any cosmic explanation or develop a mythology. Thus, the extremely old worship of Min(u) at Koptos never received any such explanation, although his rock-chapel and sacred grove would seem to us to suggest speculations. Only when the obscene statue of this god was compared with Osiris, he gained a little mythological life. The white bull attached to that cult, however, remained meaningless and mysterious. And the similarly old and primitive statue of Ptah at Memphis admitted no other explanation for later thinkers than that arising from the

pale (yellow) skin of this god and from a forced etymology of his name, namely, that he was a god much confined to his home, an artist who produced works in stone, wood and metal, hence the Greeks compared him with their smith-god Hephaestus, and the later Egyptians tried to ascribe to him a poorly defined activity at the creation of the world. An identification with the wise god of the abyss Nun, the father of all gods, is a product of these late attempts to give some meaning to the old, obscure cult. But with some less prominent gods it is questionable whether any serious attempts were made to lift them beyond the conception of the primitive, animistic age. For the masses of worshipers this was not necessary; the veneration was mostly founded more on the antiquity than on the meaning of the divinities.

We have omitted so far to discuss the group of gods which found the richest development of mythology in all Egypt and the widest worship, extending even beyond the soil of Egypt. This is the Osirian divine circle. While the names of all its gods are old and purely Egyptian, we must express doubts whether their mythological meaning and connection belonged to prehistoric Egypt. We find that the Osirian mythology is closely connected with the myth of the dying god who appears as Tammuz–Adonis in Canaan, as Dûzu in Babylonia, as Attis in Asia Minor, etc. The Egyptians themselves were conscious that the cult of Osiris had a close parallel in Phœnicia (especially at Gebal or Byblos), and partly even seem to have admitted that the Phœnician cult was more original. We find it fully developed in Egypt in the pyramid texts before 2500 and can thus trace it to the time about 3000 B.C., but we cannot establish it with certainty before that time, at least not in Upper Egypt. It may have had a long prior development in Lower Egypt where the principal figure, the god Osiris, was identified with the local god at Busiris, whose oldest symbol was a very

peculiar wooden pillar. Possibly, there the neighboring goddess Isis was associated with him as his wife and the hawk-god Horus as his son even before this triad was connected in any way with that Asiatic myth of the god of dying and reviving nature.

On the other hand, this myth was nowhere else so richly developed as in Egypt. There we find Osiris explained as manifesting himself in every change of nature, above all in the sun which dies, is buried, and revives every day; the dissection of Osiris into many pieces seems to connect the sun with the stars. He shows himself also in the moon, the most changeable of all heavenly bodies, and in some of the principal stars and constellations (Orion, Argo), even in the whole sky, so that he becomes god of the sky, manifesting himself in the celestial tree as god of the year or of eternal life. As year-god he appears also in plant-life or in the water, awakening the seeds every year; hence this god of the spring season in northern countries takes the specifically Egyptian character of the inundation water. This leads to complete identification with the Nile, as this springs from the dark netherworld. Osiris can be explained also as the abyss or even as the great ocean and as the quickening element of water in general. As god of the lower world and the realm of the dead, this black (*i.e.*, dead) god receives the character of judge of the dead, which idea is nowhere as fully developed as in Egypt. He procures resurrection to the dead, for the water of life and plant of life (often identified with the vine) are in his hand; therefore every dead man wishes to become one with Osiris. There are, however, some traces that his responsibility for bringing death into the world and becoming forefather of mortal humanity was sometimes felt and the question of a guilt was raised. After all, this was the most complicated and, therefore, the most attractive character among all the gods, as the ruler both of light and

darkness, both of life and death, the beginning and the end of everything, forefather of mankind and of civilization. His judicial seat may be found in the stars or in the lower world, or near or in the source of the Nile, either farther south in Nubia or in the depths of the cataract waters, or in other remote regions. So he lends himself easily to the character of a god of all nature.

His faithful wife Isis bears the traits of the Asiatic queen of heaven and like her appears as mourning endlessly over her lost lover, reviving him directly or at least in his son Horus or in the Nile (springing from or swelling by her tears) or in heavenly phenomena. The hawk-god, Horus, before his connection with Osiris, god of the sun or of heaven, frequently is declared to be identical with Osiris, as reborn form of the latter; this gives a satisfactory explanation of all his other cosmic explanations parallel to that of Osiris.

Somewhat later in origin seems to be the part of Seth as adversary of this good triad and murderer of his brother Osiris. This god, once the chief of the Southland or even of the whole Egyptian pantheon, who was, it seems, venerated in a strange animal which was later interpreted as wild ass, boar, etc., came into political contrast to Horus. Identified with the storm and thunder he became thus a wicked god, but nevertheless remained popular especially as a manly divinity well suited for soldiers. It is interesting to observe that his development into a real Satan began only with the introduction of the Babylonian myth of the abysmal serpent Tiâmat, after 2500 B.C. Seth was more and more identified with that enemy of the sun-god (called Apop in Egypt) and thus the impersonation of the ocean passed from good Osiris to wicked Seth. The influence of that myth, which created the idea of a Satan in so many other religions, had the same effect also in Egypt. Thus after 1000 B.C. Seth had developed into a real devil worshiped only by sorcerers.

We cannot discuss the connection of the obscure goddess Nephthys with Seth as his wife, or of an earlier god of all dead, Anubis, with Osiris as his son or at least his assistant in judging the dead, nor the rich development of the many theories about life after death. Egyptian religion after the ancient introduction of the Osirian myth often received Asiatic motifs and even some Asiatic gods, but no further influences so far-reaching as those mentioned above.

The autochthonous development of thought was slow and timid. The syncretism of similar gods was, indeed, old and the early solar explanations of so many gods prepared the ground for the theory, found after 1600 B.C., that all forces of nature were only manifestations of one great god of the universe, the sun. Thus the imperfect solar monotheism of the short-lived religious reform of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (about 1400 B.C.) was, after all, not as novel an undertaking as it seems at first; some pantheistic and almost monotheistic tendencies can be traced some centuries farther back. The masses, however, successfully resisted that reform, clinging to the old local names and cults. It cannot be repeated too strongly that all deviations from their conservatism were isolated and timid steps of a few most advanced scholars.

The question remains: Why did this religion effect such a favorable and deep impression upon the Greeks and Romans that it extended over the whole Roman empire, so that in the last centuries of heathenism many hoped to find in the popular cult of Osiris an antidote against the spreading Christian creed? True, that Egyptian religion in foreign lands was strongly influenced by ideas from other religions, above all from Greek philosophy, but still it tried to keep the outward forms of Egyptian cult, temples with hieroglyphic inscriptions, obelisks, sacred animals, etc. We cannot explain this success with the non-Egyptian masses from the moral

influence of the Egyptian religion. It brought no new ethical ideas to the gentile world. Much less can we explain that success from profound metaphysical speculations. We have not discovered a single line of philosophy like that of the Greeks in hieroglyphic writing, and must doubt whether such a literature ever was attempted. The Egyptian priests were too much keepers of the old traditions to open such new paths of thinking.

However, it seems that it was this very conservatism and the simple, blind faith of the Egyptian masses which impressed the classical people so very deeply. Greek religion had become a shadowy remembrance and was treated with skepticism and frivolity, while the Egyptians firmly insisted on the bodily presence of the gods in their temples. So the Greeks concluded that such an earnest faith must have some deeper, secret reasons and that the Egyptian gods, notwithstanding all their strange features, possessed more reality than the shadowy gods of Greece. The wonderful civilization, above all, the architecture of the Egyptians and the attractiveness of everything unintelligible added to this impression that the mysterious creed of Egypt deserved special esteem. This overvaluation of the alleged religious wisdom hidden in the hieroglyphs has remained to this day and still influences many modern scholars; but it cannot stand any unprejudiced criticism, as we have here tried to show.

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# CHAPTER III

## THE RELIGION OF BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA

BY MORRIS JASTROW, JR

### I.

OUR interest in the religion of Babylonia and Assyria is threefold: for its antiquity; for its connection with one of the most remarkable of ancient civilizations;[1] and for its bearings, in part direct, in part indirect, on the unfolding of religious thought among the ancient Hebrews.

We are now able to trace the history of the Euphrates Valley back to a period considerably beyond 3000 B.C. At that early date there were two distinct ethnic groups forming the main body of the population. As depicted on the monuments and works of art the one group is clean shaven, the other bearded, though not infrequently with the upper lip shaved.[2] The former group is marked by obliquely set eyes and a long but not thick nose, and by thin lips and rather high cheek bones, the other has the fleshy nose and thick lips as well as other features characteristic of the Semitic race. The variation extends to the dress, a flounced garment hanging from the waist in the one case, a plaid thrown across the shoulder and draping the entire body in the other. The group with the racial characteristics of the Semites was known as the Akkadians; the other, a non-Semitic group, but whose possible affinities with other races has not yet been determined, bore the name Sumerian. The centre of the Semitic settlements, at the time when the monumental

[1] See Jastrow, *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, for a full account of the history, religion, commerce, law, art and literature of the region.

[2] See Eduard Meyer, *Sumerier und Semiten in Babylonien* (Berlin, 1906), for a full exposition of the subject with many illustrations.

material comes into view, was in the northern section of the Euphrates Valley, while the strongholds of the Sumerians were in the south.[3] The Semites appear to have entered the valley from the northwest, coming down from the mountain regions of Syria, while the Sumerians —also a people of mountainous origin—probably came from the northeast, though this is still a mooted point. Which of the two groups came first is likewise a question to which as yet no definite answer can be given, though there is much in favor of Eduard Meyer's view that the Semites or Akkadians were the first on the ground and that the Sumerians entered the land as conquerors, holding the Akkadians in subjection for many centuries, until, about 2500 B.C., the tide began to turn. At about 2100 B.C. we find the Akkadians definitely in control in the entire Euphrates Valley and maintaining the supremacy over the Sumerians, though not without some periods of temporary reaction especially in the extreme southern section where the Sumerians managed to retain a semblance of political independence.

More important than the question of the original settlement of the Valley is the rivalry between Sumerians and Akkadians which directly stimulated the intellectual qualities of both groups and led to the high order of culture for which the Euphrates Valley became distinguished. It will be found to be a general rule that civilizations of the first rank develop through the commingling of two distinct races, entering into rivalry with each other. Such a commingling develops the best qualities in both. To distinguish in detail the elements contributed by each is a task that lies beyond the scope of a survey of the religious views and practices unfolded in the Euphrates Valley. Obviously, the share of the Sumerians

[3] On these divisions of the Euphrates Valley and on the early and later history of the Sumerians and Akkadians see Jastrow, *op. cit.* c. iii.

in the earlier periods was far greater. The cuneiform script developing from picture writing is of Sumerian origin. The oldest documents of all kinds are written in Sumerian. Later, when the Akkadians began to obtain control, the script was adapted to conveying thoughts, facts and data in Akkadian, while the Sumerian, though for a long time surviving in the cult, became archaic, and even before this stage was reached, was modified by the introduction of Akkadian elements. In return many distinctly Sumerian features passed over into Akkadian, and externally in the use of hundreds of characters used ideographically,[4] the Akkadian continued to show a Sumerian aspect.

In the domain of architecture, one may see the result of the commingling of the two races in the two types of religious edifices that arose in the important centres of the Euphrates Valley, (1) the house as the dwelling of the deity modelled after the human habitation, and (2) the stage tower, a huge brick construction of considerable height with a winding ascent, clearly in imitation of a mountain with a road leading to the top, as the seat of the deity. The house-*motif* for the temple is of Semitic origin, while the stage tower is the contribution of the Sumerians who, accustomed in their mountain homes to worship their deities on mountain tops, endeavored to symbolize this belief by the imitation of a mountain when they came to a perfectly flat country like the Euphrates Valley.

In passing, it may be well to remind the reader that the course of civilization in Mesopotamia is from the south to the north, that Assyria as a northern offshoot of Babylonia—the common designation of the south—represents merely an extension of the culture produced in Babylonia. The language of Assyria is identical with

[4] *I.e.*, each sign representing an entire word and not a mere syllable. See for details, Jastrow, *op. cit.* c. ii, especially p. 99 *seq.*

that of Babylonia, the art is largely borrowed from the south, though in temple and palace architecture some original contributions were made. The literature produced in Babylonia was copied by the royal scribes of Assyria, and in the domain of religious conceptions only minor modifications are to be noted in the aspect taken on by the transfer of the religion from Babylonia to Assyria.

Outwardly, to be sure, and practically Babylonia and Assyria present a striking contrast. Corresponding to the more rugged region of northern Mesopotamia, the Assyrians, mixed with some non-Semitic groups that came down from Asia Minor, appear to have been from the time that they appear on the horizon, a little before 2000 B.C., of a more martial disposition. Warfare became the expression of the genius of Assyria. A rivalry ensued between the north and south which led to serious encounters as early as 1500 B.C. and eventually brought about the subjection of the more pacific, though by no means weak, south to the north. The seven centuries from c. 1100 B.C. to 600 B.C. represent the period of Assyria's greatness, going hand in hand with her greatest martial activity; but in return she exhausted her vitality quicker than Babylonia. In 606 B.C. Nineveh fell as a result of a combination against her in which hordes from Asia Minor joined with the Babylonians to rid the world of a menace that threatened the existence of large and small nations as well. A new, though short, era of independence dawned for Babylonia which came to an end with Cyrus' triumphal entry into Babylon in 539 B.C. Persia fell heir to the glorious legacy of Babylonia. During this long stretch of three millenniums, the Euphrates Valley had undergone many vicissitudes of fortune. Not infrequently foreign invaders sat on the throne. Indeed, for five centuries (c. 1700–1200 B.C.) a people coming from the mountainous region to the

east and known as the Cassites retained the mastery over the Euphrates Valley; but the Sumero-Akkadian civilization, though suffering a temporary decline, was too firmly established to be swept away. Religion, art, literature and commerce continued to flourish, though showing changed aspects, as a period of upward tendency was followed by a reaction during the centuries of Cassite control.

## II

The Babylonian-Assyrian religion in its oldest form as revealed by the votive inscriptions of Sumerian rulers and by specimens of literature that may with great probability be carried back to the earliest period, is long past the stage of primitive beliefs, though it shows traces that in its conception of divine government of the universe it started from what is commonly termed animism. By this term is meant a view of nature ascribing life to all phenomena and of the same order as the vital force that manifests itself in human and animal activity.[5] Under this view the gods worshiped by man are personifications either of phenomena of nature or of objects in nature, primarily the sun, the moon, the storm (with its accompaniment of rain, thunder and lightning), the earth, water (including streams and wells), trees and rocks. Religion being the partly emotional, partly intellectual response to an instinct, confirmed by experience, that man is not the arbiter of his fate, it is natural for him to make the effort to supplement his inherent and self-evident weakness in the presence of nature by securing the aid of powers upon whose favor he is dependent. The storm destroys his handiwork, and therefore to avoid the catastrophe he seeks the favor of the power manifesting itself in the storm. The stream may sink his primitive

[5] See Chapter I of this work for a more detailed discussion of animism, as a stage through which primitive culture passes everywhere.

craft and therefore, before trusting himself to the treacherous element, he endeavors to assure himself of the favor of the spirit or power residing in the water. When he advances to the agricultural stage, the earth and the sun are the two forces that in the main condition his welfare; and as a consequence he personifies the earth as a mother in whose womb the seed has been placed, which with the coöperation of the sun is brought to fruition.

Starting from this animistic conception of nature, the Sumerians and Akkadians developed a pantheon, all the members of which take their rise as personified powers of nature. In thus grouping the gods into a more or less definite relationship—and that is involved in the creation of a pantheon—the religion passes beyond the animistic stage. The gods in the larger centres become, primarily, the protectors of the place, and as the group enlarges its geographical boundaries, the jurisdiction and the attributes of a local god are correspondingly increased. He becomes, irrespective of his original character, the protector of the fields, the guardian of the army; it is he who gives victory over the enemy and when misfortunes come, it is the god who sends the punishment because of anger that has been aroused in him. The combination of little groups into a powerful state brings about further changes, and as one state comes to exercise a sovereignty over other combinations of groups, the gods of the various localities are organized after the pattern of human society into a royal court with gradations in rank, corresponding to the class distinctions that grow in complication as combinations of groups result in the formation of a political unit.

Of the chief local gods which thus take on a larger character we may single out Enki, whom the Akkadians designated as Ea, and who from being the patron deity of Eridu, lying at the head of the Persian Gulf, becomes

the god of waters in general. Another deity, Enlil, originally a storm-god and associated with the old Sumerian centre, Nippur, becomes the head of the Sumerian pantheon because of the importance which Nippur acquired, in part political, in part due to the position of Nippur as a religious centre. As such, Enlil acquires attributes originally foreign to his nature. He becomes an agricultural deity and is addressed in terms which show that he has absorbed the power ascribed to the sun and water as well. At Shirpurla, another Sumerian centre, the chief deity is Ningirsu, a personification of the sun, who becomes a powerful warrior, with a mighty net in which he catches the soldiers of the enemy. In Uruk we find a great mother goddess, Nanâ, worshiped as the patron of the place by the side of Anu, originally likewise a sun-god who becomes the god of the heavens in general and the father of all the gods. At Ur, which in an early period was the seat of a powerful Sumerian dynasty, the patron of the place was Sin, a personification of the moon, pictured as an old man with a flowing beard and sailing along the heavens in a bark. Wisdom was associated with him and he too becomes in one of the systems that arose the " father " of the gods and the guide of the universe. Ut or Babbar at Larsa is again a sun-god, as is Shamash in the Akkadian centre Sippar to the north. Justice is one of the chief attributes assigned to him. He is described as the great judge who brings wrongdoings to light and saves the innocent from the machinations of the wicked.

In the later period Marduk, again a solar deity, as the patron of the city of Babylon, becomes supreme over all the gods when Babylon rises to the position of the capital of the Babylonian empire. With this step, finally achieved by the great Hammurapi (2123–2081 B.C.), the attributes of all the other great gods are bestowed on Marduk, and such tendencies toward a monotheistic con-

ception of the universe as are to be noted in the course of the development of the Babylonian religion gather about his cult. The proximity of Borsippa to Babylon (lying almost opposite the latter) brought about a close association between Marduk and the local deity of Borsippa, known as Nabu, who may have been originally a personification of the watery element—perhaps the god of the Euphrates more particularly. The relationship between Marduk and Nabu is pictured as that of father to son, and to such an extent are the original traits of Nabu obscured that he becomes merely a somewhat pale reflection of Marduk—a junior Marduk by the side of a senior.

In the same way we have in the many other localities of southern and northern Babylonia deities closely associated with a place as patron and guardian who are originally personifications of the sun, moon, water, earth or the storm, but whose original character tends to become obscured through one circumstance or another, concomitant with changes in the political kaleidoscope and with advancing social conditions. A result of this growth in the conception of the divine government of the universe—for it is to be regarded as a growth—is the tendency, on the one hand, for minor local deities to become absorbed by those in the larger centres, while, on the other hand, we note a disposition to differentiate the functions of a nature deity and to divide his various manifestations among those originally personifying the same power. Many of the local deities were, for obvious reasons, solar gods. When Shamash, the sun-god of Sippar, became, with the rise of that city to supreme political importance, the chief solar deity, the minor sun-gods were identified with Shamash. They became mere epithets; a place was provided for them in the systems devised in the temple schools, as children, messengers, attendants and servitors,—down to such human functionaries as vezirs, throne-bearers, scribes, and even bakers

and butlers. Again, when a solar deity was too important to be entirely absorbed in this fashion, the manifestations of the sun were differentiated, and a solar deity like Ningirsu of Shirpurla or Ninib of Nippur was regarded as the sun of the morning and of springtime, while Nergal, the sun-god of Cuthah, was regarded as the personification of the sun of high noon and of midsummer. The former was regarded as a beneficent power, driving away the storms of the rainy season and bringing about the revivification of nature in the spring, the latter as a destructive power, bringing suffering, disease and death to mankind through the scorching heat and drought of the mid-summer season.

It thus happens that a widely diffused polytheism continues to be the striking feature of the Babylonian-Assyrian religion, despite the counter endeavors to devise theological systems that aimed to reduce the many gods to a limited number of superior powers in actual control of the universe. Between these two tendencies, the one towards providing a place for literally hundreds of deities, the other towards concentrating actual divine power in a limited number, the Babylonian-Assyrian religion runs its course. The former tendency leads further towards recognizing, besides hundreds of deities, a large number of minor divine beings, demons pictured in human or animal form to whom diseases and all kinds of mishaps are assigned. We shall see presently how this belief led to divination practices of all kinds, which form a very prominent part of the practical religion. The latter tendency has its outcome in the division of divine government among three powers. There are several groups of such triads. Foremost stands a triad composed of Anu, to whom the control of the heavens is assigned; Enlil, who rules the earth and the atmosphere above it, and Ea, who represents the watery element surrounding the earth, and on which the earth is supposed to float

like a rubber ball. In the case of all three gods all local limitations have entirely disappeared, as have all traces of the specific power of nature originally personified by each of them. In fact, they have become almost abstractions, representing or symbolizing three divisions of the visible universe. The triad reminds one of the injunction added to the second of the Biblical ten "Words," not to make any image for worship of anything in the heavens above, on the earth beneath or in the waters under the earth, and which reads like a protest against the Babylonian triad. Less artificial in character and of more practical import is another triad frequently occurring in inscriptions and invariably depicted by symbols on the boundary stones,[6] consisting of Sin, the moon-god, Shamash, the sun-god, and Ishtar, the planet Venus, symbolizing the great mother goddess, the source of life and fertility. These three gods represent the chief powers upon which man is dependent, summing up, as it were, the chief protectors of human life and the chief guides of his being. In place of Ishtar, Adad, a general god of storms who never appears to have had any specific local cult, is introduced, and not infrequently we have, instead of a triad, a group of four,—Sin, Shamash, Adad and Ishtar, in which combination the latter represents the female element in general, essential as a complement to the male to produce the manifestations of life in the universe. Around these triads as around the group of four gods, speculations were developed in the temple schools which led to giving the Babylonian-Assyrian religion certain mystic aspects, albeit of a purely theological character.

In general, however, and for the purposes of the cult, a much larger group of great gods was recognized, the

[6] See Jastrow, *op. cit.*, plate lxii, and for many specimens, King, *Babylonian Boundary Stones and Memorial Tablets in the British Museum* (London, 1912).

number of which in Assyrian days was fixed at thirteen. So far as these chief gods are concerned, the Assyrian pantheon, it may be noted in passing, is identical with that of Babylonia, but for the single figure of Ashur, originally a solar deity and the patron of the city of Ashur, the earliest capital of Assyria, who naturally became the head of the Assyrian pantheon. In keeping with the martial spirit of the Assyrians, on which we have dwelt, Ashur became primarily a god of war. He does not appear to have been ordinarily represented by a human figure, as were the other gods of Babylonia and Assyria, but by a rather refined symbol, a disc representing the sun, with rays streaming in both directions.[7] The symbol reveals the association of Ashur with the sun, but it also points to an attempt to rise beyond purely animistic conceptions. The winged disc becomes a general symbol of divine power, arising at a time when the seats of all the great gods, under the influence of astrological speculations, were placed in the heavens. In this respect Ashur reminds us of Anu, who, it will be recalled, became the god of the heavens *par excellence;* and indeed there are some reasons for believing that Ashur, the chief god of Assyria, was originally Anu and that Ashur is an epithet, having the force originally of the god of the city of Ashur. At all events we know that Anu was worshiped in Ashur and that the god Ashur like Anu was a personification of the sun, enlarged in both cases to a very general conception of divine government of the universe.

Ashur, naturally, takes the place in Assyria which in Babylonia belongs to Marduk, but such was the force of tradition that Marduk continues to be invoked by the Assyrian rulers as their patron deity by the side of Ashur, particularly after Babylonia fell under Assyrian control. The Assyrian conquerors did not regard their inauguration complete until they had proceeded to the southern

[7] See the illustrations in Jastrow, *op. cit.*, plate xxxi.

capital and there in a ceremony that involved "taking the hand of Marduk" or Bel, *i.e.*, "the lord," as Marduk came to be called, confirmed their rule over the south as well as over the north. The gods thus recognized as the chief figures of the pantheon and commonly invoked by the Assyrian rulers were Ashur, Sin, Shamash, Adad, Marduk, Nabu, Ishtar, Ninib, Nergal, Nusku.[8] Adding to these Anu, Enlil and Ea, we obtain the number thirteen as the pantheon. Each of these gods had a female consort, but these associates are merely pale reflections of their male companions and, with the exception of Ishtar, who is, as we have seen, an independent figure, play a very minor rôle in the cult. The Assyrians, it should be added, recognized three Ishtars: one the goddess of Nineveh; another, the goddess of Arbela (not far distant from Nineveh), and the third designated as the "queen of Kitmuru," the origin of which term is obscure. But Ishtar as the chief and, in a sense, the only goddess becomes naturally the consort of the head of the pantheon. So in Babylonia Ishtar is associated with Marduk and in Assyria with Ashur, although Marduk's consort has also another name, Sarpanit, that is, "the resplendent one," while Ashur standing above all the gods is generally spoken of in a manner to suggest solitary grandeur, brooking no one—not even a consort—by his side.

We have already indicated that such tendencies as exist towards recognizing a single power as the sole arbiter of the universe centre in Babylonia around Marduk. Correspondingly, we find in Assyria, Ashur rising to a position which suggests that the Assyrians too were groping their way to a conception of the unity of the universe. The thought that all phenomena are to be traced to a single source was at least grasped, though never in so definite a manner as to lead to a genuine monotheistic

[8] The god of fire—originally, again, a solar deity.

conception of divine government. Steps in this direction were made, but after all the force of the old animistic conceptions of the gods was too strong to lead to a definite change in the religion. Ashur remains, like Marduk, a *primus inter pares,* though so much more pronounced in his personality that all the other gods impress one like little Ashurs by the side of the great one. There is none like Ashur, just as in Babylonia there is none like Marduk. The higher spiritual conception of the presence of the divine in the universe thus encountered decided limitations, and despite considerable speculation of a relatively advanced theological character in the temple schools, the religion of the masses remained on a low level. This is particularly illustrated in the cult to which we may now turn.

## III

The gods exist according to the Babylonian-Assyrian point of view in order to be worshiped. They feel lonely without temples, and in one of the accounts of creation the gods are represented as creating mankind in order to have temples and worshipers. In return, the gods act as protectors of humanity, although in the early period of predominating local cults each god is interested only in those who dwell within his jurisdiction. Success in undertakings, good crops, business ventures, health, possessions, victory in arms—all come through the favor of the gods. The aim of the cult, therefore, is to secure and happily to retain the good-will of the gods. The gods must be kept in good humor. They crave homage, and woe to the ruler or people who neglect to pay the proper respect to the gods. By a natural corollary, all misfortunes are ascribed to the anger of the gods. Bad crops, defeat in battle, pestilence, destructive storms, mishaps of all kinds, including failure in business, are the punishments sent by offended gods. The theory was a convenient one, for it shifted the responsibility from one's

own shoulders for ill-fortune and placed it on the gods, but on the other hand there was also some reason for the anger of the superior powers, albeit one was not always able to fathom it.

This theory of the alternate favor and anger of the gods formed the basis of religious ethics as well; it dominates the view taken of sin, for sin meant the commission of an act or an omission of one, resulting in arousing the anger of some deity. Such an omission might consist in not bringing tribute or in not asking for his assistance in any undertaking, while the commission might be an error in pronouncing certain formulæ or a mistake in the performance of some religious rite.

By the side of such acts or misdeeds, not involving a breach of ethics from our point of view, there were also actual transgressions, such as lying, cheating, stealing, adultery, treachery, cruelty, failure to show proper consideration for one's parents or for one's fellows or neglect of other duties that would arouse the displeasure of a god. The genuine ethical element thus enters into the religion, but it is characteristic of the status of the religion that down to the latest period no distinction is made between an ethical misdeed and a purely ritualistic transgression or omission.[9] The appeal to the gods was made by certain acts and rites, more or less symbolical, accompanied by the recital of certain formulæ supposed to have the power of making a direct appeal either for the manifestation of divine power or for the removal of a god's displeasure. The aspects of the cult thus resulting may be grouped under two categories, (1) incantations, shading off into prayers and hymns, accompanied by rites to symbolize the release of a sufferer from disease or from some other evil, and (2) divination methods to ascertain the disposition and by implication the intention of a deity,

[9] See as an example the category of "sins" in Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 291.

and thus to forestall impending evil, or at all events to be prepared for the blow, if it was inevitable.

The hoped-for release from sickness—the most common punishment sent by an angered god or goddess—naturally plays a very large part in the incantations, as well as in compositions of a higher order, properly to be classed as hymns but in which the incantation *motif* is always discernible. Demoniac possession as the essential reason for bodily pain and tortures was accepted by the Babylonians and Assyrians throughout all periods, despite considerable progress made in the medicinal treatment of disease, through the use of numerous drugs and concoctions as well as observance of diet, and through such more advanced methods as massage, poultices, enemas and surgical operations.[10] The aim of the physician was always represented as an endeavor to drive the demon of disease out of the body, or to remove the ban resting upon the sufferer through the power of a sorcerer or witch. The cure was incidental to the expulsion of the demon or to the release from bewitchment. Incantations continued, therefore, to form part of the treatment of disease and are introduced into texts that are distinctly medical in character. Medical treatment is supplementary to the use of incantations and of the symbolical rites, such as burning effigies of the demons or sorcerers made of wax, wood or the like, or drowning them or inflicting tortures upon them in the hope of inducing them to abandon their hold on their victims.

The use of incantations rested upon the wide-spread view held by people in a primitive state of culture and surviving into advanced periods, of the power supposed to reside in words as such, when uttered by the properly authorized persons. They generally consisted of a direct

[10] See details in the writer's paper, "The Medicine of the Babylonians and Assyrians," in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Medicine* (Section for the History of Medicine) for March, 1914.

appeal or command or of a jumble of more or less mystic formulæ.

As a specimen of symbolical rite to accompany the incantations, a brief extract from a series known as Shurpu, *i.e.*, "burning," in which the destruction of the demons or sorcerers by fire in various ways forms the chief feature, may suffice.

> As this onion is peeled and thrown into the fire,
> burned by the consuming fire,
> Never again to be planted in a garden,
> never again to be harrowed,
> Its root never again to be stuck into the ground,
> Its stalk never to grow, never again to see the light,
> Never again to appear on the table of a god or king,
> So may the crime, pain, anguish,
> Sickness, sighing, sin, misdeed, transgression
> and wrongdoing,
> The sickness in my body, in my flesh and in my limbs,
> Be peeled like this onion.
> On this day may it be burned by the scorching fire,
> May the bar be removed! May I see the light!

From such a jumble to genuine prayer seems a long step, and yet the incantation is virtually a prayer; and the interesting feature of the Babylonian cult is the process which led to higher and worthier conceptions of the gods, despite the fact that the earlier and crude ones were retained.

These higher ideas cluster to a large extent around the sun-gods, though moon-gods and water deities and the great goddess of earth come in for their share. Shamash, as the sun-god *par excellence,* becomes the symbol of light and justice. He is extolled as the great "Judge" —a title very frequently assigned to him—who brings the evil that lurks in dark places to the light, whose rays give health, who seeks out the oppressed and the unfortunate to restore them to honor and happiness. He is above all a just judge who takes no bribes, who frees the innocent and punishes the wrong-doers, whose aim

is to let justice and right prevail in the world. A hymn to Shamash reads:[11]

The mighty mountains are filled with thy splendor,
Thy brightness fills all lands;
Thou reachest to the mountains, thou gazest upon the entire earth.
Thou watchest over all the inhabitants of the earth.
* * * * * * * *
Thou seekest out the transgressor, the utterance of the wicked thou rejectest.
Everyone, whoever he be, is in thy keeping.
Thou guidest judgment, the imprisoned thou releasest.
Thou dost give ear to lament, to prayer, invocation and petition.
The one in anguish cries to thee,
The weak, the powerless, the oppressed and the wronged.

While such hymns touch the high-water mark of religious compositions, the ideas embodied in them find expression in songs of praise and appeal and thanksgiving to other gods—to Sin, to Ea, to Marduk and to Ishtar. Ea, more particularly, is appealed to in the cult as the god of humanity who saves even when others fail. It is he who intercedes with the gods when they decide to bring on a destructive deluge. Through him a favorite is saved from whom a new generation is produced. Ishtar is viewed in hymns composed in her honor as the loving mother of mankind, and Sin as a merciful father.

The direct result of these higher conceptions was to lead to a deepening of the consciousness of man's proneness to sin, of the weakness of the flesh in resisting temptations. The thought of the justice, mercy and kindness of the gods reacts on man's realization of his own responsibility for the sufferings that befall him. In illustration of this we have a large number of compositions in which this consciousness of sin is emphasized. The sense of guilt, rather than the misfortune itself—generally again sickness of some kind—weighs upon the soul of the penitent, who pours out his lament in

[11] For further specimens of hymns and prayers to Shamash and to other gods, see Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 465 *et seq.*, and *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, c. xvii.

a most pathetic and impressive manner. He is pictured as bent down with grief—not daring to look upon the face of his god; he breaks forth in bitter weeping. The priest intercedes in his behalf,—

Because his god and his goddess are angry with him, he cries to thee.
Turn thy countenance to him, take hold of his hand!

The penitent responds:

Outside of thee there is no guiding divinity,
Graciously look upon me, and accept my petition!
How long yet, O my goddess! Turn thy countenance to me!
Like a dove I moan, satiated with sighs.[12]

Accompanying these appeals is the confession of sins, and what is particularly noteworthy the admission of wrong-doing, even though one may not be aware of the particular sin for which one has been punished. The underlying thought is that the gods are just. Suffering is not sent without a cause, even though one be unable to discover it.

## IV

The old, however, survives by the side of the new. Older methods of ascertaining the disposition of the gods are retained, despite their inconsistency with the higher conceptions of divine government that find an expression in hymns and penitential psalms, just as in the midst of the finest religious compositions jumbles of primitive incantations are introduced that bring us at a bound to a much lower level.

In illustration, we have throughout all periods of Babylonian-Assyrian history the uninterrupted and unlimited sway of various divination methods as a means of peering into the worship of the gods to see what they purpose to bring about and to forestall, if possible, any mischief that may be brewing.

[12] For further specimens see Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, c. xviii, and also Morgenstern, *Doctrine of Sin in the Babylonian Religion* (Berlin, 1905).

Incantation and divination supplement one another. The incantation, as we have seen, forms part of a system of remedial treatment; divination falls within the category of preventive measures. The anger of the gods might manifest itself in many other ways besides sending a demon or a sorcerer to plague the body. Natural catastrophes, such as failure of crops, a wide-spread pestilence, invasion of the land, an earthquake, destructive storms, would be symptoms of divine displeasure. In such event rulers and people would repair to the temples, to take part in the purification ceremonies conducted by the priests to rid the land of uncleanness and, in other ways, to remove the cause of divine wrath. Critical junctures would arise, foreboding certain events, and at such times it would be of prime importance to ascertain the mood of the gods.

There were in the main three methods of divination employed in Babylonia and Assyria. The oldest of these and the most primitive in character was the inspection of the liver of a sacrificial animal—usually a sheep; secondly, the observance of signs in the heavens, and, third, the drawing of omens from abnormal phenomena, such as anomalies in the young of animals or in infants, movements of animals, dreams, and from all kinds of happenings that deviated from normal experiences or contained elements of a striking or even merely noticeable character. Let us briefly consider these three methods.

To prognosticate the future by an inspection of a sheep's liver seems at first blush to be as irrational a method as could well be devised. For all that, hepatoscopy, or liver divination, rested on an order of ideas which, while primitive, was nevertheless logical. The liver as the bloodiest organ in the body was regarded by all peoples in a primitive state of culture as the source of life, which was naturally associated with the blood. The liver was in this stage of belief the seat of the in-

tellect and of the emotions—the higher as well as the lower. Functions that were at a later juncture in popular beliefs divided among three organs of the body—intellect centring in the brain, the higher emotions in the heart and the lower in the liver—were at one time concentrated in a single organ—the liver. The liver was, therefore, also the soul of the animal, and in the case of a sheep offered to a deity the soul or mind of the god was supposed to be reflected in the liver of the animal thus sanctified. By the observance of the character of the lobes, of the two appendices of the liver, of the gall-bladder and the cystic and hepatic ducts, as well as by the forms of the markings that appear on livers of freshly slaughtered animals, all manner of conclusions were drawn. Natural association of ideas formed one basis for drawing conclusions. Enlarged lobes or ducts would be a favorable sign, abnormally small ones unfavorable. Peculiarities on the left side of the gall-bladder or of the appendices to the liver would be unfavorable to your enemy, the same signs on the right side would be unfavorable towards you; and so on. Another basis of interpretation would be furnished by the records of events that happened—favorable or unfavorable—on previous occasions when certain signs on a liver or certain shapes of the markings on the liver had been noted. *Post hoc, propter hoc* is a fundamental principle in all systems of divination. A single occurrence would furnish a criterion for the future. An elaborate scheme of liver interpretation was thus evolved which, set forth in handbooks, has come down to us among the remains of Babylonian-Assyrian religious literature. Through such interpretation of signs on the liver it was possible at any moment by the sacrifice of a sheep to ascertain whether the moment was auspicious for going to battle, for undertaking a journey, for laying the foundation of a temple, for planting, and what not. If the signs or a majority

of them were favorable, it would indicate that the gods were well disposed. If, however, the signs were unfavorable, it portended that the god was angry and must be propitiated before one could venture on any undertaking, no matter of what nature.

A second form of divination, also playing an important part in the practical exercise of the religion, involved the observation of phenomena in the heavens. In this case the sign was forced upon one's attention—not deliberately sought out as in the case of liver divination. Astrology, which resulted from this form of involuntary divination as we might designate it, was also of a far higher order, for it rested upon the identification of all the heavenly bodies—sun, moon, the planets, and the prominent stars—with the gods, irrespective of the original character of these gods. The five planets were identified with five of the chief deities, Jupiter with Marduk, Saturn with Ninib, Mercury with Nebo, Mars with Nergal, and Venus with the goddess Ishtar. The theory underlying the endeavor to prognosticate the future from the appearance of the sun, moon, and planets, from phenomena observed in connection with their position and their movements in the heavens, was the belief in a correspondence between conditions existing in the heavens and events on earth. All happenings below being ascribed to the gods, the phenomena to be observed in the heavens were interpreted as the activity of the gods preparing future events. Observation of the heavens afforded a peep into the worship of the gods, and if one could see what they were doing, one could conclude what was going to happen as the outcome of their activity. In contrast to liver divination which rested on primitive beliefs, astrology was a form of divination that resulted from an intellectual advance which led man to the study of movements in the heavens. Astrology was thus an outcome of the science of the day, though it developed

into a pseudo-science. Even when astronomy arose as an independent and purely scientific study, astrology or the interpretation of heavenly phenomena with reference to man's condition and fate on earth continued to be cultivated; and it was not till we reach the threshold of modern science that the partnership between the two is dissolved. Greek and mediæval astrology reverts to the system evolved in the Babylonian temples for connecting the activities of the gods in heaven with events on earth directly affecting man's welfare.

This system was again based as in the case of liver divination on two leading principles, (1) association of ideas, (2) observation of what actually happened, following upon certain phenomena in the heavens, or upon the appearance and relative position to one another of the heavenly bodies—more particularly of the moon and the five planets. So, for example, obscurations of the moon or of a part of it were by a natural association generally regarded as unfavorable signs. The "transition" periods in the phases of the moon were particularly noted. Since down to the neo-Babylonian period the Babylonians had no means of calculating the *exact* period of the appearance of the new moon or of the time of full moon or of the disappearance of the moon at the end of each month, what to a people depending entirely upon empirical observation seemed a too early or too belated appearance of the new crescent or of the full moon or of its disappearance at the end of the month would assume great importance. Again, by a natural association of ideas, a too early or a too belated appearance or disappearance would be on the whole unfavorable, while the normal or expected would be favorable. The same was true with the movements of the planets and more particularly their appearance at any given moment—whether bright or dull, as well as their exact position in the heavens. In the case of the sun and moon there were other kinds of phenomena,

such as halos, spots, peculiar colors and various forms of obscurations, besides actual eclipses. The sphere of observation was extended to the formation and color of the clouds, to the character of storms, to the number of thunderclaps in a storm, to the course and the brilliancy of lightning flashes, to rainbows and much more of the like. In time the field of observation thus grew into enormous proportions, as is shown by the hundreds upon hundreds of clay tablets grouped into series and detailing in a more or less methodical arrangement all kinds of phenomena with the interpretation attached.[13]

A third miscellaneous division of the almost boundless field of divination was formed by the importance attached to all manner of striking and abnormal phenomena in the case of anomalies, in infants or animals, at the time of birth,[14] to the flight of birds, to the movements of serpents, dogs, sheep, swine, ravens, locusts, roaches, etc., to strange mishaps and encounters, to dreams, to the action of flames. In short, almost any occurrence that deviated from the normal was regarded as an omen; it portended something and it was the business of the diviner to whom people would come with their inquiries to be ready with an interpretation. The upshot was that the people felt themselves hemmed in by the many superstitions to which they clung, though it must be borne in mind that not all of the vast territory of divination lore was embodied in the official cult. This was restricted to liver divination, to astrology and in some measure to dreams and extraordinary happenings, which had a bearing on the general welfare. The interpretations in all such cases bore on matters of general concern, the crops, pestilence, rebellion, invasion and defeat. Only in so far as what happened to the king or to members of the royal family

[13] See for copious specimens in the author's (German) work, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, vol. ii, c. xix–xx.

[14] See a monograph by the writer, "Babylonian-Assyrian Birth Omens and their Cultural Significance" (Giessen, 1914).

was looked upon as an omen for the country at large because of the special position accorded to the rulers by virtue of their standing closer to the gods than the rest of the population, did the individual play any part in the official cult.

Included in the cult was the observation of numerous festivals in honor of the gods. Each divinity appears to have had a series of special days during the year set aside for one reason or the other, on which occasions sacrifices would be offered in the temples, accompanied by the singing of hymns or the recital of litanies. The festivals were not always joyous in character. Indeed, there was to most of them an undercurrent of sombreness. Coming usually at transition periods, the gods were implored to be favorably disposed in the impending seasonal changes. This sombre character was naturally more pronounced when misfortune threatened.

If, in conclusion, the question be raised as to the influence which the religion with its elaborate form of divination, with its variegated incantation ritual, its festivals and special occasions, its days of contrition and days of thanksgiving, exercised on the life of the people, the general verdict must be given that the ethical ideals, as voiced in the extensive religious literature, in the myths of which we have a considerable number,[15] in creation and deluge tales,[16] in the exploits of heroes, human but with semi-divine traits,[17] are relatively high. Obedience to the gods led to placing the emphasis on fair dealings with one's fellows. Reverence for the superior powers upon whose favor the general as well as the individual welfare depended entailed, as a corollary, respect for the laws developed for the government of the country, albeit that the

[15] See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, c. xxiv.
[16] See Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 427–452.
[17] See Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, c. xxiii, for an analysis of the Gilgsmesh Epic—the chief literary production of Babylonia.

people had little direct share in such government, which remained autocratic to the latest period. The gods, though often depicted as arbitrary, yet on the whole appear to have had a real concern for the welfare of humanity. Ea is the protector of humanity even against the wilfulness of gods, while Shamash, the sun-god, as we have seen, becomes a synonym of right and justice.

The rulers themselves set the example to their subjects. Hammurapi knows of no higher ambition than to become celebrated for all times as a "father" to his people. He codifies the laws to govern his people, in order, as he says, "that the strong may not oppress the weak, that the innocent may be protected against violence and that the man with a righteous cause may secure justice." [18] Business practices were based on a spirit of fairness and family relationships were regulated according to principles of mutual helpfulness. Even the Assyrian rulers who were most ruthless in their ambition for conquests and insatiable in their lust of power pride themselves upon having maintained the laws providing protection to their subjects. We have ethical precepts [19] —little collections of ethical sayings—which inculcate kindness, fidelity, truthfulness as the highest virtues by the side of piety and devotion to the gods. The hymns and penitential songs, as well as the prayers attached to the inscriptions of the rulers, breathe this same ethical spirit, even while asking the superior powers for purely material blessings. On the whole, the verdict must be given that the religion of the Babylonians and Assyrians while never rising to any genuine spirituality and failing to lead to any relationship between man and the gods whom he worshiped other than that of a "give and

[18] See the introduction to the code in R. F. Harper's translation, *The Code of Hammurapi*, and the analysis in Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 283–315.

[19] See the specimen in Jastrow, *Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 464 *et seq.*

take" compact, expecting divine favor in return for homage to the gods and punctilious performance of rites and the offering of tribute, yet acted as a spur towards unfolding the best in human nature. We cannot go so far as to say that ethics was the sovereign force in the religion, but the beliefs and practices of the people had as their outcome the creation of equitable standards of life, with respect for law, fair dealings with one's fellows, reverence for the gods, kindness towards the poor and consideration for the weak, as among the duties which were to be illustrated in daily conduct.

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# CHAPTER IV

## THE HEBREW RELIGION

BY JAMES A. MONTGOMERY

A FAR-OFF land near the end of the world—that is the tradition we have received from our fathers of the region where was born the religion of the Hebrews, which in its own right as well as the mother of our Western religion peculiarly claims the student's attention. Out of the hazy East comes the Jew, then the Christ,—they settle in the West, and the land of their nativity fades from sight. Only loosely and for a few centuries attached to the world of Hellenic-Roman civilization, it disappears in the limbo of the Orient. Apart from the scanty history, or tradition, or legend, contained in its sacred books, the oblivion of the human mind and the rack of ages have covered up the history of that sacred land and as well of the great empires among which it nested. "God was pleased to reveal himself to the Jew first," so the Gentile convert was taught, but in a land and circumstances so strange that the revelation appeared sole and unique. No science could be made out of that sacred history, for there were no similars with which to compare it.

Gradually since the 17th century, when Biblical scholarship and oriental philology began to attack the secrets of the Orient, the veil has been gradually removed. In our own time it has been literally rent. The religion of the Old Testament stands forth as one of many great religions or religious systems which were its neighbors and with which it vied. The mist in which moved its actors, at least down to the time of Cyrus, has been dispelled, and Abraham, Moses, David and the Prophets no longer walk the stage alone. We have

discovered the setting for the picture, or rather where once only a few lonely *personæ dramatis* appeared, now the stage is crowded with the actors of the tremendous drama of the ancient Orient. We can study the history of that religion from outside, apart from its own authoritative sources, with documents which parallel them, which in their contemporaneity often far excel them in historic fact. The Old Testament religion has been confronted with its ancient peers, we can compare them together, appreciate their relative values, mark their interplay and mutual influences. We might think we were nigh to rob it of its secret and explain it all, but as in the advance of all true science with each discovery made we only uncover a greater mystery.

Let us place the geography of that ancient religion. It arose in the northwest corner of Arabia and developed in the adjacent land of Palestine, a country about the fourth of the size of Pennsylvania. Not far away, to the west, was Egypt with its hoary civilization and fascinating religion. Farther to the east were the empires of the Euphrates valley, whose civilization and imperium dominated the land at many epochs for two millenniums. Over the sea was the Ægean civilization, the mother of the Hellenic arts, which now we date as far back as 3000 B.C., and whose peoples came into contact with the Palestinians before the Hebrews invaded the land. With the settlement of the Ægean Philistines in Canaan began the eternal conflict of Greek and Hebrew. From the far north stretched the arms of the mighty Hittite empire, whose advance guards reached as far as Jerusalem and Hebron. At the back of this world of competing and eager young civilizations lay the womb of Arabia, which sent forth its swarms of splendid desert sons to conquer and be conquered by those advanced civilizations. Unnamed hordes came out thence, Canaanites, Amorites, Hebrews, Aramæans, later the Minæans and Sabæans

of great native empires in the far south of the land, all these the precursors of that greatest of Arab invasions which was stimulated by Mohammed. Then when the Hebrews are settled in the land they come into contact with the commercial Phœnicians on the coast and the opulent and martial Aramæan states to the north, like Damascus. There follows the sweeping of the great empires over these lands, of the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Persian, each with its own characteristic. Finally came the Greek conquest or rather the overflowing of the Greek civilization, which gave more to and took more from that religion than did any of its predecessors. It is a strange fact that none of those kindred Semitic religions, but an alien civilization from the west, became the solvent for the best in the religion of the Hebrews.

What produced this religion in that welter of the ancient Semitic world? Was it only a precipitate of the best in one of the great religious systems of antiquity—of Egypt, as philosophers of the 18th century proposed, or of Babylon, as some modern scholars dogmatically claim? Or was it chance commingling of certain elements in that one spot, the comparatively unimportant land of Palestine, which fortuitously produced the supreme product of ancient oriental religion? Was it a native characteristic—wherein we might run the risk of making Renan's mistake in claiming that the Semites were naturally monotheistic? Or was it a great personality or series of great personalities who experienced spiritual truth in their hearts and lives and enforced it upon an unwilling people—as the Old Testament itself holds?

This problem I will not seek to unravel, although I have my prejudices. The purpose of this course is not so much to give the history of the great religions as to present their great contents, especially as these have had effect and value in the world. But the survey of Israel's

geographical and historical place in the world teaches this, that the religion of the Hebrew from an early point in its development had obtained a definite place in his consciousness which made it a *summum bonum*. And further, his relations in the midst of those ancient empires and civilizations are to be studied not only in the light of the amalgamations which he may have effected with other systems of thought, but rather in the obstinate opposition which he ever presented to them. With all their modifying influences, the part of those other civilizations and religions is to be compared with the strokes upon the blade lying on the anvil; they tried it out, tested it, gave it its edge. We do not have to go to very ancient history to remark this. The story of the Maccabæan revolt against Hellenism, the most glorious episode in Hebrew history, shows how, despite all the subtle influences of fascinating Hellenism, when the danger was apprehended, the Hebrew religion reacted. It gave the world the finest thing its politics has ever seen, the man of religious conscience refusing to worship the deity of the state and insisting on worshiping the God of his heart alone. Some deep-ingrained conviction, originated and developed however we may surmise, along with an ethical obstinacy which supported that conviction even to death, was the characteristic of the Hebrew religion. Later religions have shown like tendencies, although rarely with such a permanent history. This quality has given to modern minds a harsh aspect to the Hebrew religion, especially to the loose thinking and light living of us moderns. The fantastic systems of Egypt and Babylonia and the mythologies of Greece have been more agreeable to philosophic and æsthetic tastes; they have perished except so far as they have been sublimated into poetry. But the idea of a definite conviction in religion, with the grim ethical purpose to live and die by it, that is the contribution of the Hebrew religion to the world. Within

the sphere of our western civilization only one other religion, excepting Israel's daughter Christianity, has shown the like characteristic: the religion of Mohammed. And his religion was born in the same region as that of Moses, in the deserts of western Arabia. If we inquire for geographical and ethnical causes for these two great phenomena of religion, we are driven back to Sinai and the wastes about Mecca, and to some stock of people morally capable of possession by a great religious enthusiasm.

There is not time in these two lectures to present the Hebrew religion within each of the successive phases and to examine their connecting links. Further, I feel that with the many excellent books on the subject accessible to the layman, many coming from the best hands, it would be tedious to reader and writer to repeat what must be largely commonplace. I will indicate the broad divisions of the history, and then pursue a few chapters of the religion, noticing where necessary the historical development. This method involves our treating the results at the end of the process rather than the process itself; it will station us largely in the age of the Prophets of the Assyrian period, or in the Post-exilic age when theology and cult were permanently institutionalized. We shall have to take the Old Testament as it stands as the authoritative pronouncement upon itself by the Hebrew religion, and largely avoid the problems of origins and criticism. But this summary procedure is inevitable in a brief sketch of any historical institution. Greece is the age of Pericles, and Rome the days of the end of the Republic and the rise of the Empire. Only when a people has expressed itself in final conscious form of politics, art and religion can it exert its influence on others and pass on its hard-won heritage.

My broad divisions are as follows:

(1) The Mosaic Age, to about 750 B.C.

(2) The Age of the Prophets, to the destruction of Jerusalem, 586 B.C.

(3) The Post-exilic Period, into the first century A.D.

Some notes are necessary on this summary division. The Mosaic Age includes the prehistoric period, represented by the patriarchal traditions, while the age after Moses is naturally subdivided by the settlement in Canaan, about 1200 B.C., and the rise of the monarchy, about 1000 B.C. The Post-exilic Age has a momentous epoch in Alexander's conquest, 332 B.C., and the following era may be called the Hellenistic Age.

Defence is to be made for my carrying on the history of the Hebrew religion into the first Christian century. It transgresses the traditional view that the Old Testament was codified by Ezra in the 5th century, an almost dogma which has been explicitly or implicitly accepted by Judaism and by Christendom, especially in the Protestant wing. But the Old Testament Scriptures themselves come down into the 2d century B.C.; the Book of Daniel, 165 B.C., and Ecclesiastes are typical of the characteristic development of Judaism in the late Hellenistic period, the former of eschatology, the most striking offshoot of late Jewish theology, the latter a product of one school of thought which orthodox Pharisaism drove out. But we must not stop with that 2d century. The history of an institution demands that it be carried on to the end or until the epoch when fresh developments require a new scientific division. And unless we leave two centuries of remarkable religious experience hanging unattached in the air, our history finds its goal in the first Christian century, when the rise of the Christian Church, and the fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, radically changed the fate and the constitution of Israel. From this point we have the histories of Christianity and of Judaism. Not that there is any consciousness in Judaism of a break at any of these epochs, but scientific distinction requires of us a definite

conclusion, where a beginning may be made by subsequent historical science. Accordingly, the late Judaistic literature must be taken into account; a history of the Hebrew religion must include the Apocrypha of the Christian Biblical canons, the Apocalyptic literature, the writings of Philo which fed Christian theology, and the beginnings of the rabbinical literature.

I proceed to sketch some distinctive features of the Hebrew religion. In view of the summary character of this course I develop my theme from the chief centres of gravity.

## I. The God of the Hebrew Religion

The Hollander scholar Kuenen invented the term "Ethical Monotheism" as descriptive of the characteristic of the religion of the Prophets. That is, the God was one and was an ethical being, and there was necessary relation between the unity and the moral character. This term, still largely employed, is absolutely inadequate. The History of Religion runs the same danger that wrecked much of the old dogmatic theology in trying to present such a religion as that of the Bible in arid philosophical terms. For the Hebrew Deity did not become one in the sense of aloneness, as modern Theism or Deism requires, until the age of the Exile; while even after that period there were survivals and revivals of the older plurality or multiformity of deity, which condition Hebrew theology until at least the schism of the Christian Church, while it persisted later in Judaism in the form of Kabbalism. Nor, with all appreciation of the ethical character of the God of the Hebrews, is it correct to absolute ethics or to comparative Semitic religion to regard his ethical character, except in degree, as one of his absolute and unique differentia. When we think of the morality of the deities of paganism, we too spontaneously call up the fascinating but often morally degenerate

gods of Greek mythology, with which creatures of the poetic fancy the stern, moral deities of the Semites had little in common. In consequence of the undue stress laid upon the ethical note in the character of the Hebrew God, the scholarship subsequent to Kuenen has been almost startled by the lofty ethical characteristics of the Babylonian deities, as presented in hymns and litanies, even in such a legal document as the Code Hammurapi. The fallacy of the science of religion has lain in attempting, in consonance with modern thought, to make religion a by-product of ethics.

The unique characteristic of the God of the Hebrews is his intense personality. In part this is expressed in certain terms and phrases; thus he is the Living God. There is the divine insistence on his ego, as in the refrain of one of the Levitical Codes, "I am Yahwe,"[1] or in the Second Isaiah, of the 6th century, "I am He," "I am Yahwe," "There is none other than He." There is the divine jealousy which brooks no other gods, not so much on the ground that they do not exist but for the self-assertive egotism which will stand the company of no others. But the unique personality of Yahwe appears most strikingly in the Old Testament record of his divine revelation through history. This is not so much a revelation of things about a God, a creed, a metaphysics, but the revelation primarily of a person, knowledge of whom will reveal his character and commands. We learn nothing about Yahwe in the traditions of his appearance to Moses in Ex. 3 and 6, only know that a Deity has revealed himself. Indeed, the substance of the revelation lies in his name, which to the Semitic mind was the symbol

[1] For this pronunciation of the Divine Name, with accent on the last syllable, as generally accepted by modern scholars, see *Enc. Biblica*, col. 332of. The current "Jehovah" is a fairly modern barbarous formation, but pre-Protestant; see G. F. Moore, in *American Journal of Theology*, 1908, 34ff, and *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, 25: 312ff.

and vehicle of personality, "I am Yahwe." The people learn of him further not as the One or the Righteous God but as the Saving God. In one sense the Old Testament is reticent in describing his characteristics, and hence perhaps in part the difficulty modern thought feels in analyzing him in categories. On the other hand, that volume lays its stress upon his self-revelation through history—always in a personal way—to Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, Priests and Apocalyptists; the accent is rather upon how he revealed himself than what he revealed, as though the discovery of his person was the important thing.

This characteristic of personality appears peculiarly in his relation to his people. He is first of all a tribal God, of that I have no question, perhaps only a god of a family, perhaps, with one theory an alien God whose acquaintance was made by chance in the desert. And he remains always a deity particularistic in his relations, he is the God of Israel quite as much as the Creator and God of the whole world. His full name is "Yahwe of Hosts, the God of Israel." This particularism, which offends our modern cosmopolitanism, is an expression of his essential personality. It is a limitation, we say, on the pure idea of God, but a limitation which is necessary to the idea of the personal. For it is of the essence of personality that it is independent of other personalities, independent and self-existent, and can only come into contact with other persons through acts of the will and of desire. It is a mistake to try to push the loftiest of the Prophets to a more abstract idea of his person. Amos, who states Yahwe's control of the world as strongly as any, and perhaps more clearly (*e.g.*, cc. 1–2: 9:7), nevertheless holds to the divine particularism. "You alone," he says for his God, "have I known of all the races of the earth." For the loftiest of the theologians, the Second Isaiah (Is. 40–66), Israel was Yahwe's Servant, alone admitted to

the arcana of his knowledge and mysteries, hence alone furnished to preach his gospel to the world.

From a tribal God he becomes a national God: his relationship remains a personal one, now to all Israel. To the people grown into a nation, the faraway question of the God of the whole world still lies in the academic field. There are early apperceptions of his cosmic and universal character, but these, on the basis of comparative religion, we must take with a caution, for the same powers are attributed by the pious Babylonian to many a god, almost in the same breath. And to avoid prolonged argument, I must avoid depending on these early assertions. The reform of the religion of Northern Israel, known under Elijah's name, in the 9th century, consisted only in the expurgation of the intruded worship of a foreign deity. The Prophets of the 8th and 7th centuries concerned themselves with the elimination of the polytheistic and immoral Baalism of Canaan. Their interest lay in establishing him as sole deity for Israel, and that meant on Palestinian soil, for other than Yahwe's soil was unclean and profane, unconsecrated by his presence (*e.g.*, Amos, 7: 17). The dispersion of the Exile and the spiritual discovery of their God's presence in unclean lands, developing the implications rather than explicit doctrines of the Prophets, gave Israel its first absolute idea of the World-God. The Church after the Exile appears to our taste to have sadly degenerated from the Prophets by its accent on holiness. Yet it remained true to the core of Israel's spiritual development, because that idea of holiness was an expression of the personality of God and of Israel's sole intimacy with him. For the idea of holiness is not only a taboo doctrine; it may fall into the utter mechanical and become magic, but it is consonant with the highest spiritual religion. To the devout mind holiness is the aura of the divine presence, into which only the consecrated can enter. The New Testa-

ment word *hagios,* "holy, saint," retains the antique notion, and it is not there primarily an ethical term.

Further, this characteristic of personality appears not merely in the relation of Yahwe to the nation as a whole, which relation must have remained psychologically impersonal, except so far as it was mediated by the officers of religion, king and seer and priest. From the beginning to the end of the Old Testament we have the stories of the divine communication with persons apart from sacred office. Israel is not descended from a race of priests—as the Epistle to the Hebrews makes the point; Abraham was an old-fashioned Sheich. That Moses possessed his revelation through some other right than birth is presented by the fiction of the Scriptures that the hierarchy was descended not from him but his brother. Only two kings appear as organs of revelation, David and Solomon, although the royal right thereto, as in the pagan religions, was doubtless professionally claimed; this appears from the Royal Psalms and in the pretensions of Simon Maccabee. But Yahwe worked through grace not by privilege, even as in the Patriarchal history he chose the younger sons by his arbitrary choice. He spoke by the child Samuel to the priest Eli; he took Amos from following the sheep, and the priest Jeremiah when he was still too young to officiate and one of a degraded family. It is only with the Exile that the priest becomes the prophet, and then comes the decadence of prophecy. But even after this the priest is replaced by the authority of the Wise Man and then of the Rabbi, and Judaism still is ruled by the intellectuals of the democracy. The mediation of the Hebrew religion has been made through revelation to the individual—into which no science can pry.

This unique personal relation with Israel, whose dogma was, "Him alone shalt thou serve," is the foundation of Israel's monotheism. That result sprang out of

Israel's spiritual experience with its one God, not from a philosophical or political monism, as has been the history with henotheisms and monotheisms. What we may call the credal statements of Israel's faith show its contrast with anything like absolute monotheism, and this difference must be recognized in order to avoid the apparent antinomies of Hebrew theology. Compare the First Commandment of the Decalogue, "Thou shalt have no other gods but me," with the Mohammedan confession, "There is no God but God," and you observe the lack of absolute monotheism in the Hebrew religion. To this day the complete statement of Israel's faith is the so-called *Shema,* "Hear, O Israel: Yahwe thy God is one Yahwe" (Deut. 6:4), but this was in its origin the denial of the local Baalism of Canaan which divided the national God into as many deities as there were local shrines—like the competitive Madonnas of a Latin country; so Jeremiah indignantly exclaimed: "According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah" (Jer. 2:28). Yet Israel's over-much religiousness was addressed to Yahwe.

Yahwe indeed appears as the creator of the Kosmos, but that, as I have said, cannot be too far pressed as an assertion of monotheism. Numerous passages reveal the admission of other gods and assume the legitimacy of their worship in their own lands. David reproaches Saul for driving him into foreign lands to worship strange gods. Elijah permits the Syrian Naaman to worship Ramman of Damascus, and the latter takes with him loads of earth from Yahwe's soil to worship withal the Hebrew God. The one thing noticeable is that Yahwe has no social relationships with other divine peers. But solitary as to divine peers, he is by no means a lonely God. With him are associated the *Benê Elohim,* the Sons of God, who are not angels in the Christian sense of the word, but divinities, as the name implies, members of

the category of deity over against creatures. These beings appear not only in such a thorough-going myth as that of their cohabitation with human women, "the daughters of men" (Gen. 6), but all through the Scriptures as God's attendant court. With them he consults as upon man's creation. "Let us make man in our own image," and over man's presumption in building the *zikkurat* of Babylon: "Let us go down and confound their language" (Gen. 1:26; 11:7). This heavenly court, "the host of heaven," is revealed to the prophet Micaiah, among them the Spirit of Lying, who is to seduce the prophets of Ahab (I Ki. 22:19ff). The book of Job opens with a similar scene when the Sons of God report to him like satraps or the Eye of the King to a Persian monarch (cf. Zech. 1:7ff). In Second Isaiah we do find practically absolute monotheism, but the process of Israel's conversion to the denial of polytheism seems to have been largely based upon the absurdity of idol worship. In fact, after the Exile, and particularly in the Greek age, in some part, no doubt, under Greek influence, there is a recrudescence of the inherited notion of the Sons of God. The monotheism that was possible even under the strain of the Babylonian conquest could not maintain itself absolutely with the tremendous vision of the world empire which Alexander instituted. The fates of the innumerable peoples, and with the growth of science the manifold and contradictory forces of the world, could not be adequately explained from science by monism. The doctrine of Princes (Dan. 10:20f), of Angels (*e.g.*, the Apocalyptic literature), of the innumerable spirits of nature (Ps. 148: the Benedicite in the Greek of Daniel 3)—which are not simply to be poetically interpreted any more than the Greek nature divinities—this whole development was not altogether alien to Hebrew thought. The one abiding principle was that no

worship should be rendered by Israel to this heavenly host (Deut. 4:19; cf the Greek of 32:8).

Still more interesting to us because of its relations with many striking phases of philosophy, with Greek and Christian theology, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, Jewish Kabbalism, was the belief, under various forms, in intermediate essences, hypostases, which mediated between the spiritual and intangible Deity and the world of matter. Such hypostatizations are ancient in Hebrew thought. It appears classically in the Angel of Yahwe (never an angel in our sense), who is the manifestation form of Deity for sight and sound in the older traditions. He is not a distinct personality, and his vagueness is due to the grappling with a heavy problem, that of God's relation with the world. We might think of the Angel of Yahwe as the composition with the ancient polytheistic legends, at the same time we know of like species of thought in the other Semitic religions which never attained to monotheism but are striving after a certain systematization in theology. So the Angel of Bel (Mal-'ak-Bel) appears as a Palmyrene deity. And in both the Phœnician and the Hebrew religion we have the Face of God, temporarily hypostatized in the latter, personified in a separate deity in the former. What the Face, *Prosopon,* implied is clear when we recall that it became the term for the Persons of the Christian Trinity. The "Name" is another hypostasis; he "lodged his Name in Jerusalem."

In the Hellenistic age we find a concept of an intermediate hypostasis congruous to the new world of thought, that of Wisdom, *e.g.,* Proverbs, 8, Book of Wisdom, 7:22ff. Theological students dispute whether we have here more hypostatization or more personification or personalization; the purpose of the concept is evident. A more generally Semitic concept of an intermediate to the divine action upon the world is that of the

Word; it can be traced back into the Babylonian and Old Arabic religions. In this concept Hebrew thought shared catholicly with Stoicism: its great Greek philosopher Philo developed it with puzzling ambiguity in his treatises, and laid the foundations, along with his school of thought, to the Christian doctrine of the Logos. In a more prosaic way the Jewish Targums mediate all the divine relations to the world by the Memra, the Word of the Lord. Such were the metaphysical possibilities of the Hebrew idea of the one God.

I have made this long excursion on the Hebrew idea of Deity in order to point out the peculiar quality of its monotheism. It was not attained by abstraction, as was the Mohammedan monotheism; nor did it proceed through a political henotheism to a supreme monarchy of one god, as in the ancient empires. The monism of the Hebrew faith was practical, experimental, economical; it lay in the unique personal relation of Israel to its God. He was one to them, to their obedience and affection, and became ultimately to their intellect the only one. He saved them at the Red Sea; he marched with them from his home on Sinai; he brought them into the promised land, where he was a stranger like them; he made them a nation and was their monarch, expecting their sole service as monarchs are wont to do, but with a passion and jealousy which no gods of paganism ever affected. When the vision of the larger Kosmos snatched them out of their provincialism in the coming cataclysm from Assyria, their seers had the vision to hold that the same God would be true to them if they were true to him. In fact, their vision preceded historical experience, which proves that religious logic was working on ancient principles. It was a tremendous stretch of faith which shocked Israel's provincialism even as it challenged the nations and religions of the world. But the lesson was driven home deep enough into the heart of the people so that they

withstood the shock of the Exile—the one known case of the survival of a conquered and transported people preserving and purifying its religion in ancient history. The fall of Babylon, the Return, the survival of the remnant in the dark ages that followed, the triumph over the deadly persecution of Hellenism for faith's sake, corroborated and hardened the faith that stood the early tests. Wherever they went, whatever their experiences, Yahwe remained their God. It was the result of this experience that brought them to the dogmatic assertion of him as the God of the whole world.

There seem to have existed ancient elements in this faith in their particularistic God which tended to the resultant monotheism. To worship only the tribal gods was practically the rule of ancient communities. These wandered rarely into the folds of other gods. But the rise of nations and empires and the establishment of closer social contact among peoples introduced syncretism. It was the common logic that a traveller or sojourner in a foreign land should worship its gods. But from the beginning of Israel's religious history there appears to have been an exclusive demand made upon their faith by their God. Lesser deities were associated with him in popular cults, this development occurred at times in Jerusalem, but he never submitted to becoming a member of a pantheon, one of many gods.[2] Even when David cries that he is being driven into foreign lands to serve strange gods, there is expressed his heart's pang that he must abandon Yahwe. In some way, and why not by the Moses of tradition—for great religions have always personal founders—the exclusiveness of Yahwe in his relation to Israel was pressed in upon them. There may have been some theological economy in the old Arabian

[2] In the recently discovered papyri of the Jewish colony at Elephantine in Upper Egypt several lesser deities, mostly personified cult objects, accompany the Hebrew god.

religion with which the Hebrews were early connected—the same region brought forth monotheistic Islam. Probably the peculiar migratory history of the Hebrews who found a wandering God in the desert, who travels with them, involving a detachment on his part from a local habitat, may have chained their affection to him, like the love of two friends wandering in a foreign land, like the love of bridegroom and bride, as Hosea idyllically pictures it. And this detachment of their God from mere place gave them a larger view of Deity than is the lot of the ordinary tribe whose god is locally confined and which picks up new gods wherever it travels. It is interesting to notice that even in Palestine he remained a peculiarly supersensuous God. His ark was not necessary to his religion, it suffered ignominious capture, and his early sanctuary Shilo was destroyed (I Sam. 4; Jer. 7). It was long before he found a home at Jerusalem; even then the home was not necessary to him. He could endure the burning of his house, the destruction of his sacred ark, and Ezekiel sees his glory moving majestically away from his abandoned temple. If, after the Exile, there is more than ever before an insistence on locating his presence in the holy city, nevertheless the higher reach of faith had been made; his holy temple is in the heavens (Hab. 2:20). The Hebrew did not proceed in his thought from what God must be in his relation to the world, but rather finding him everywhere, and always ready to serve his people and to rise above their enemies, he found him through experience a cosmic God. But their deepest interest lay always in their experience, what they had found in him for themselves, only secondarily, and so far as this served them, in his relation to the world. They learned of him as World-God only when they became world-citizens; but their faith was ready for the ordeal. This very particularism of the Hebrew religion, this particularism of Yahwe, seemingly the very pole to a

starting point of a cosmic and monistic theology, was the secret and safeguard of what Israel ultimately effected in the world's monotheism. In the study of the history of religion we have to begin not with preconceptions as to what God is, but to follow the method in which he revealed himself, that is, the way in which men or a race came to believe in him. Monotheism grew up in Israel, but almost in the opposite way to that which our philosophy would expect.

We are compelled to the position that from the first of Israel's known religious history there was working an inner logic which binds together its beginning and climax. There is an intellectual foundation to that religion the ignoring of which has led to the assumption of all kinds of chances to explain the product, which really came of inner necessity. It was Wellhausen who made the classic remark that the Mosaic religion was summed up in this word: "Yahwe Israel's God, Israel Yahwe's people." This axiom developed its logic. The worship of one Deity alone, or the conscience of his jealousy, led to the denial of competitive or antagonistic deities. For if other gods there were, as gods they implicitly deserved service in their lands and empires. If those gods were not to be worshiped, it was a confession by implication that they did not exist. It was a similar and withal uniquely drastic application of logic which shut up all the shrines of the land under King Josiah to teach the one national God through the single sanctuary at Jerusalem. And it was by a similar logic that Judaism proceeded to the sense of its missionary duty to the world, as set forth in the Evangelist of the Second Isaiah and the parable of Jonah. If there was only the one God and Israel alone knew him, it was Israel's commission, if there were any pride and humanity, to make him known to the world. The religion of Israel was led on by the same unconscious logic that has driven every monistic religion into claiming

and preaching a Gospel for the world. The same singleness of mind which marks the home religion forces it into the exclusiveness, intolerance, bigotry, if you will, which is the antinomy in every religion which will be catholic.

## II. Yahwe's Relation to the World

Yahwe appears as the sole creator of the world, from the two stories of Creation in Gen. 1–2 and through the Old Testament. No "partner" is associated with him in his creative acts, except in the passage, "Let us make man in our image," a reminiscence of earlier polytheism, but a phrase which remained acceptable to the late hand which finally redacted that chapter. The Hebrew verb we translate "create" is used exclusively of the divine action, but our theological content of *creatio ex nihilo* is not to be read into it; the raw matter of the universe exists from the beginning; on its origin Hebrew thought did not speculate. Yahwe is the artist of the Kosmos, actually a Protoplast with his own hands in the Yahwistic Creation Story. The mythical aboriginal monsters of Chaos survive in the poetry of the books of Isaiah and Job, again almost entirely as literary reminiscences and often given an historical interpretation. The Tiâmat of the Babylonian legend appears in Gen. 1 as Tehôm, "the deep," but without personification; it is the Chaos. Yahwe's lordship over the universe is expressed in various epithets: he is "the Possessor of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14: 19); Yahwe Sebaoth, understood at least subsequently as the God of the heavenly hosts; the King of the world, as in the application to him of the title of the Persian monarch, "the Great King" (Ps. 48: 2); "the Judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18: 25). Some of his titles are of most antique origin, as the Highest (*Elyon,* Gen. 14: 19), and in themselves predicated nothing as to his absoluteness; their content must be obtained from the sum of the theology.

There exists accordingly in the Old Testament a remarkable singleness of mind and religious equanimity; there is no distraction as among a number of possible or rival powers or objects of obligation. It is noticeable that that sphere wherein magic is the *opus operandum* and the cult of the dead from early fell under the ban of the official religion (*e.g.,* I Sam. 28:3); both elements continued and had their renascence in the Judaistic period, but the spirit of Yahwism forbade their entrance into the public religion. This monism affected as well the moral sphere of the conflict of good and evil. What was elsewhere attributed to demons and ghosts or to fates higher than the gods was logically assigned to the one divine power. The physical evil of the world was assigned to him, always in explanation of it man's sin being given; not only so, but, where it suits his purpose to punish men, he is the ultimate ground of their sin, as when he hardens Pharaoh's heart (Ex. 4:21) or sends his Lying Spirit into the mouth of his prophets (I Ki. 22). But as physical evil was always held to be the exact correspondent and equivalent of moral fault, this doctrine had its fateful result. In the earlier age when Israel was on the whole prosperous and the accent lay upon the community and not at all on the individual, the easy calculus of good and evil was borne without too great difficulty. After all, it still exists in all popular religion, while its logic is hard to avoid in any theology of a one God. But the crash of the ancient system of moral philosophy came with the age which saw the fall of the monarchy and its dispersal of the scattered individuals from whom as spiritual units was constructed the Jewish Church; it was the age, too, of that prophet of individualism, Jeremiah. The crisis is marked in the experiences of this prophet and in the spiritual drama of Job. The hero defies his friends' contention that his evil lot is the result of his sin and denies that they speak for God. He finds no answer

for his problem except in resignation to the God of unspeakable ways. Theologically the drama ends in skepticism, but mystically Job has learnt that his Champion lives.

However, this stubborn higher faith in the one God who must be withal righteous, so that a man appeals to him as against him, was not practicable in the mass of the religious folk, even in the official religion. It is a dramatic coincidence that in this tremendous trial of the simple Hebrew faith Persia with its dualistic religion became mistress of the Jewish people. Without doubt that new, sternly moral religion had its effect upon Judaism, although not, I believe, to the extent that many scholars suppose. Rather, Zoroastrianism was itself a symptom of the breakdown of the older simple-minded faiths. Judaism equally but not to the same extreme met the problem with a projection of dualism. The survivals of ancient polytheism were revamped for the explanation of the evil and sin of the world. Satan, one of Yahwe's chief ministers, became his antagonist; the celestial hosts are divided into good and bad angels, there is war in heaven. The ancient myth of the marriage of the Sons of God with the daughters of men—in its framework in Genesis set forth as a crowning act of audacity, and then forgotten—is rediscovered to give a celestial explanation of sin, a factor brought in from an outside sphere into God's good world. The ancient Serpent of Chaos had become a rationalistic snake in the Garden of Eden, but he now again flashes out in his true colors as the old Dragon. The drama of good and evil is carried into the heavens. There we must leave it where Christianity accepts it, proclaiming a Saviour from the Prince of the power of the air and the forces of darkness. In the richness of its experience the Hebrew religion met, even if it did not escape unscathed, the fiercest of doubts con-

cerning a one good God, but after all left its monotheism a heritage for the world.

But we err much if we think that the doctrine of the Creator God was the chief element in the Hebrew theology concerning the world. This was made a cardinal tenet in the early Jewish proselytism and in the preaching of the Christian Gospel, where the doctrine almost precedes that of the Saviour. Cosmic speculation must connect the origins of things with the responsible deities of the universe, the one God must be the creator at least of the Kosmos in its original plan. But the cardinal, the unique characteristic of the Hebrew doctrine of Yahwe's relation to the world consists in making him not so much the God of its beginnings as the God of its history. Here we lay the finger upon what I am inclined to think is the most original thing in the Hebrew religion.

Where other sacred volumes are theologies, metaphysics, revelations, the Old Testament is primarily a history. And the creed of Israel is a historical confession. One thinks first of the prayers and liturgies of the Jewish Church, in which the sacred history of the race is recited as the basis of present faith and future hope—a precedent carried on into the Christian liturgy of the Eucharist. We can carry these confessional retrospects in their almost stereotyped form back to the Psalms and the prayers in Ezra and Nehemiah. But the same historical faith is equally strong in the Second Isaiah and Deuteronomy and it colors all the Prophets, in their rebukes as well as in their promises. It is most striking in the earliest of the canonical Prophets, Amos and Hosea: both books are full of reminiscences of the sacred story and of God's working through history, for it is an absolutely false view of the Prophets which would make them abstract theologians and moralists, without a country and without a tradition. But more striking than this prophetic literature are those great historical cycles, now

incorporated in the canon, from Genesis into Samuel, with their legitimate descendants stretching down into Kings. These books we scholars prosaically call Yahwist and Elohist, or, curtly, with abstract symbols J and E. Scholarship has hardly reread the Scriptures enough to appreciate them. But these writings which go back to the age before the monarchy in their origin, and which often are the finer the earlier they are, as is true of all classics, are pervaded by the theme of the stately march of Yahwe through human history. He is a living God, pulsating along with man in human events. And the earliest monuments we have of Hebrew literature tell the same story; the Song of Deborah bids sing of the "righteous acts of Yahwe," that is, of his victories, since the day he came out of the desert, and the Song of Moses recites how "the horse and the rider he threw into the sea." There is a golden thread binding the earliest literature with the latest, the most stereotyped and conventional forms of ecclesiastical vogue.

In studying the Hebrew religion we have, I believe, to understand the spirit of its sacred volume as a whole. It is absurd to hold that the composition of that volume as late is representative only of the latest period, what we call Judaism. It is a compilation of earliest and latest sources, in that sense the volume is not one, but a variegated library. But it is one in its presentation of one great consistent theme, that of the historical providence of God, of a God with a purpose for his people and finally also for the world.

Equally the writer of the second story of creation, whom we summarily call J, and the writer of the first, symbolized with P, writing perhaps centuries apart, set their stage for a world drama. In the one we have man as the lord of God's creation, given his dominion over the world; in the other the first man and the first woman set in the paradise made for them, with all things good,

and only the possibility of evil present in the fateful tree. In the two stories together we have man as the child-like yet godlike intelligence, the relations of man and woman, the beginnings of society, virtue and the possibility of sin. The reader feels that God himself was interested in that first chapter of the human race, even as he himself is. He reads on into the second act and sin comes into the world. But God still continues his plan despite the sinful race. With its degeneration he destroys it by the flood, but continues his purpose by saving one righteous man. Even the dry Table of the Nations (Gen. 10) has its place in the drama because it reveals the God of all human history, who, as Amos says, "led up the Philistines from Caphtor (or Crete) and the Syrians from Kir as he led up Israel from Egypt" (Amos 9:7). Israel never denied but claimed its partnership in the world's history. The story narrows in its scope with the selection of Abraham as the hero, but it is no mere provincial history that we follow as it stretches on. "The Friend of God" issues into a family, and this into a nation, which we pursue in its vicissitudes and migrations, its triumphs and failures. The gods of the Gentiles love success, they cling to their chosen people when these are triumphant, they fail them when these succumb; or rather they live and die with the fortunes of their people. This was not the case with Israel and its God. As he had no birthplace, so he has no tomb. He possesses a divine claim upon them, what is called the Covenant, which involves a mutual responsibility between them: he will not let them go, pursues them with the fierceness of his love; they cannot lose him or they themselves are lost.

The political history enters into a church history. The nation dies and the people are raised to life again, for Yahwe Sebaoth's purpose in history will not be frustrated, whether it is to save his honor, as the Calvinistic Ezekiel claimed, or because he has a world purpose for his servant



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Jacob, as the Second Isaiah preached. The nation becomes a church, with a history on its political side sordid enough, as church history is wont to be. But the feeble folk takes its place in the world as a spiritual community, living in this world and not of this world, and yet worldly enough, we may thank God, to fight for its life against Greek *Kultur,* in its one gross exhibition, as it once fought the Philistines. The volume comes to an end, but its latest book is one of visions for the future, and the divine purpose is not concluded. In the full view of history it gives birth to a daughter which becomes the nursing mother of our western world, and both the venerable mother and the more vigorous child each cherishes that sacred history as prophetic of its future. In the hearts of both is written deep the belief in a God of history who fulfils himself in many ways and who still guides toward a more glorious future only to be accomplished in the heavens. This other-worldly thought comes in with the Apocalyptists of Judaism and the early Christian Church; their imagination, fed on the history of the past, would break through the veil of eternity and carry on God's purposes to infinity. The history of religion dare not ignore such a tremendous historical and cosmical consciousness as has been developed in those long centuries, still so potent and imperative on men. It is the idea of the Kingdom of God.

I am not discussing the historic truth of this historical consciousness. My point is that Israel regarded itself from early days as a people with a future and a destiny, and ultimately with a mission in the world. This idea appears in the antique odes called the Blessings of Jacob and Moses, and in the cycle of the Balaam poems (Gen. 49; Deut. 33; Num. 21ff). It is by no means adequately explained from Israel's political or intellectual genius. Neither Egypt nor Babylon produced such a consciousness; the likest to it is that of Greece or Rome, but the

greatness of those peoples is the explanation of their claims. Israel's consciousness is due to its religion, to an original idea concerning its God's purpose which it never let go and which it always amplified in historic connection with the past. In this consciousness Israel has given the world one of the greatest contributions to common religion; it may be called Theism, in opposition to the arid Deism into which most philosophies and the refinements of the higher religions empty. Better, it is the doctrine of the God in history, or, as the Hebrew simply put it, of "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

### III. Man in His Relation to God

Man was created as the climax of creation, absolutely distinguished from the beasts, and possessing the breath or spirit of Yahwe. Except for the subtle serpent of the Yahwistic creation story and Balaam's speaking ass, there is an absolute gulf between man and the lower orders of creation. The whole human race is derived from one original pair, and the relationship of the Chosen People to all humanity is stressed in the early part of Genesis. Israel is not different in origin or character from the rest of the world, but is elected of the divine will. In the oldest legend man was created for the fellowship of God. God walked and conversed with him in Paradise, was hospitably entertained by Abraham, and the subsequent history of divine communication and revelation sets forth the divine fellowship of Deity with his human creatures. The relation between the two is a moral one, the merely ritual element is in the origins suppressed. The maintenance of the relationship was dependent upon man's disobedience; human sin sprang from disobedience.

The Old Testament religion is often represented as an aspect of oriental servility, the human creature cringing before the divine king and despot. This view is based

upon an ignorance of early Semitism and its social life. The Arab is not a serf or a slave; the actual Arabian of historical knowledge is an essentially independent and skeptical being. To him, as to the Hebrew, kingship was a later and secondary institution: the elder society was based on the fiction of a great family, the leader of which was the eldest and best. Even when the monarchy developed in Israel, it remained what we may call a limited and, according to Deuteronomy, a constitutional monarchy; its claims were not easily brooked, as the attitude of the prophets shows. Messianism itself grew up not so much as a result of the monarchy as in opposition to it. Again, there is the parallel in early Islam, where we find the Caliphs reigning not by inherent right but through the assent of the people. The pattern of a divine despot was not given by Israel's early constitutions; rather this idea came in with the later experiences under the world empires. Then Yahwe becomes the king. The reverence before Deity is to be referred to natural awe, need not have been patterned after earthly institutions.

Hence the Hebrew God is not originally a king. As the ancient names show, equally for the Hebrews, the old Arabians and the Amorites who established the first dynasty of Babylon, he was represented under terms of the tribal life. In Abraham's name he is the "lofty father," in Hammurapi's he is the "Uncle," *i.e.*, "Patron," or the "Brother," as in Ahimelek. He is given the title Adon, "Lord," or Adonay, "my Lord," which expressed conventionally something like the English "Sir," or "Milord," and this becomes one of his standing epithets, but the name Ba'al, which was indigenous to Canaan, meaning the owner of the district, with the inference that its citizens were serfs or chattels, was never easily acclimatized, and the Prophets reacted against the epithet on good constitutional tradition.

Probably we dare not press too much the terms of

almost easy familiarity on which the Patriarchs conversed with Yahwe. That is more or less common to all ancient mythology and folk-legend. Still they are to be noticed as presenting the personal relation subsisting between Yahwe and his human friends even in the austere official history of Israel. When Abraham pleads so humanly for the lives of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—he is taking the democratic liberty of counselling the chief who admits him to his intimacy.

But we have to observe this significant fact that the media of communication between Yahwe and his people were not confined to an aristocracy or hierarchy. The Hebrew tradition in regard to cults and sacred castes is ancient and genuine. The temples were not the first things built, as in the Babylonian legend, nor was man created in order to provide sacrifices for the gods, as in Greek thought. It is a strange thing that a religion which appears to culminate in the elaborate ritual of Judaism actually held that this was not the original status; it introduced the whole elaborate cult at a given moment of history. And when we recall the long line of individual organs of revelation in that sacred history, and also the democratic phases of spiritual life which have manifested themselves through subsequent Judaism and Christianity, we are forced to admit that there were ancient elements of great spiritual liberty in that religion which, however obscured at times, nevertheless persisted for the world's use. We are accustomed to think of early Semitic religion as entirely composed of ritual, taboo, magic, with a consequent elaborate system of sacred officiants. The Hebrew historical tradition does not bear this out. The Patriarchs are not priests, and Amos and Jeremiah deny that sacrifices were offered in the Mosaic age (Amos 5:25; Jer. 7:21ff). I fear the history of religion will deny the statements of the Prophets, but the important

fact is that there existed wide-spread such an unsacerdotal, anti-caste idea among the Hebrews at an early age.

Recognizing this element which is not discoverable from archæology and which appears to be denied by the later ritual development in Judaism, we may be able to understand a phenomenon in Hebrew religion which generally challenges explanation. I refer to the institution of Prophecy, the most distinctive order in Hebrew life, and without a compeer in the world's religion. The present tendency of religious criticism is to postulate a spiritual marvel in the Prophets of the 8th century, which almost approximates the admiration for Jesus Christ. It is presented as having no roots in the past, to have been confined to a small circle of men, and yet to have had such an effect upon the subsequent religion that it tremendously modified it and left an enduring pure impression which lasted through the ages with its fruition in Christianity. But I wonder whether, if we are to attempt a scientific treatment of the subject, it is not wiser to allow some early original element in the crucible of the Hebrew religion which made the soil from which the Prophets grew. Is the Hebrew history all in the wrong when it points to a series of men who, apart from cult and caste, talked with God, received his inspirations and revelations? Again, it is not the question whether these stories are to be taken at their face value, whether Abraham entertained God in his tent or Moses saw his face. But the presence of this tradition, not merely in the Prophets themselves, for they have almost nothing to say about the earlier heroes, but in popular story-books, points to another capacity of religion than that which we sum up in a devotion to cults and taboos. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, were not the figments of later writers, if the taste of their hearers was entirely different. We should then hear more of rollicking heroes like Samson, or for religious tastes more

of the tales of temples and priests. But their subject matter must somewhat gauge for us their audience and its tastes. Evidently there was a stream of religion stretching behind the Prophets in which lay in embryo some of the higher spiritual goods of mankind. This position does not deny the existence in predominance of every other strain of religion, to the most mechanical and unspiritual, to taboo and fetich systems, these often inextricably entwined with the highest elements. But as none can deny that in the atmosphere of Jewish cult and legalism have grown up some of the great saints of the world, or that Jesus of Nazareth cannot be historically explained except from that Judaism, so we must allow higher strains in the earlier religion of which we should have no echo but for the Prophets and the Biblical story-books. We are too much possessed with the evolutionistic theory so-called and think that the order is always first the lower, then the higher; modern science denies this in the physical world, and equally the study of ancient civilizations denies it.

I suggest, therefore, that while we regard Prophecy as creative in the absolute sense and diminish not a whit from its honor, nevertheless we look at it also as symptomatic of the Hebrew religion. Moses and the great Prophets and certain Psalmists and Jesus are certainly not so many isolated individuals: that were an unscientific attitude. Rather, if we may use scientific categories of spiritualities, they are to be explained together.

For these men who make the Bible religion what it is represent the essential character of that religion, its note of the personal God who comes into communication with his creatures made for godlikeness. The note is the same whether Abraham is the Friend of God, or Moses his Steward, whether Elijah hears his voice at Horeb, or Isaiah sees his glory in the earthly temple, or Jesus calls him Father. It is the personal God, often acting un-

accountably as personalities do, who selects those whom he will for his intimacy and disregards the conventions of men and ecclesiastical castes. As he selected his own chosen people, so ever and again he elects chosen individuals and admits them to his counsel. And as that chosen people was to be his servant to the world, so he elects this "goodly fellowship of the Prophets" to preach his law and gospel to the world, for it is only through human personality that the divine Person can be made known. The Prophets sublimate the religion of Israel, but they are also its necessary corollaries.

I pass on to that phase of man's Godward side which may be summed up in the word "cult," the ritual, formal service of Deity. In most religions, higher as well as lower, the cult plays quantitatively the greatest part, in its practice, and for the great masses of humanity cult is religion. A quantitative predominance holds as truly for the Hebrew religion. The Old Testament is actually the greatest manual of archaic religion which science possesses. Outside of the scanty monuments and chance references of classical and Arabic writers we actually know very little of the early Semitic ritual, for the Babylonian is not to be taken into account as presenting pure Semitism, it is too greatly charged with the Sumerian element, and is too highly elaborated; at the best this parallel is good only for studying the latest phases of Jewish cult when there was possibility of extensive Babylonian influence. The Hebrew cult is a phase of the old Semitic cult, with its origin in North Arabia and its further developments in Syria, also a land of genuine Semitism. As the cult does not for the most part distinguish the Hebrew religion from its affiliated rites, I give it less proportion in this study, which must deal with the differentiating characteristics of that religion.

In one important respect the phenomenon of the cult in the Hebrew religion is remarkable; that cult was not

static, as in the case of Babylonia, it was ever in flux; and further there was in the Hebrew religion the consciousness of this flux and of the epochs of its history. We might best compare the Greek consciousness, in the form of legend, of the introduction of the Orphic and Dionysiac cults. Several clearly marked stages may be marked out in our field.

(1) The primitive period, illustrated by the Patriarchal and Mosaic traditions; here we have many reminiscences of the antique Arabian cult.

(2) The period of assimilation with the elaborate cult-system of Canaan; this system, which also probably contained elements that had filtered in from Babylonia, the Mediterranean, possibly Egypt, was the principal alien factor in the history, although there was too much of an identity among the various phases of the Semitic cult to allow us to distinguish exactly between Arabian and Canaanitish.

(3) The age of reaction, chiefly represented by the Prophets of the 8th century, although earlier prophetic men had taken stand against the Canaanite innovations, for example the prophets who opposed the building of the temple in Jerusalem.

(4) The compromise betwen the Jerusalem hierarchy and the prophetic reformers, appearing in Deuteronomy and carried on into the so-called Law of Holiness (Lev. 17–26) and Ezekiel. The elements of Canaanite religion regarded as antagonistic to the worship of Yahwe were done away with in the drastic reform of Josiah; the cult was absolutely centralized at the temple at Jerusalem. But this centralization only intensified the ritualistic elements of the religion, and these triumphed with the acceptance by the prophetic element of the purification of patently objectionable features. As in the case of the reforming Akenaten of Egypt, the reform broke down with the death of King Josiah, but, unlike the Egyptian

precedent, a composition of contrary forces had been formed which set the order for the future. For it was the element that accepted this reformed order which persisted through the cataclysm of the Exile. Ezekiel, a prophet but still more a priest, and withal an apocalyptist, laid down a typical ritual scheme for the security of holiness in the future.

(5) The ecclesiastical establishment of the Post-exilic Age. This conserved the chief theological results of the Prophets, provided them with a shell the world could not break, but made Judaism a typically ritualistic institution. It continued the unobjectionable elements of the elder cult, restored ancient forms of practice, added new elements to perfect the scheme, probably introduced Babylonian elements, and in general theorized at will. And the flux-like character of the Law was continued by those High-Church Progressives, the Pharisees. But the same age which saw the intensification of the ritual of the community to an abnormal degree witnessed the rise of its antinomy, the Synagogue, the cultless meeting-house of the Jews. It was the centralization of the cult in Jerusalem which in part produced this pole to itself; but the phenomenon also grew out of older spiritual elements of the religion which the later crystallization could not harden or control. Prayer and praise, in forms which have become classical, took the place of the sacrificial cult for the greater part of life; the Sabbath with its rest and worship stood for the elaborate calendar of sacrifice; the teacher, wise man and rabbi became the spiritual leaders of Judaism, and ultimately laid down the law to the hierarchy. These spiritual elements kept their place in or made their way into the cult itself. The Psalter of the Christian Church was the hymnal of the temple, many of its songs being the actual accompaniments of the temple ritual; the theologians met in the temple, and there Jesus could preach, for it was his "Father's House."

After all, the spiritual religion of the Jew found nothing incongruous to itself in that temple ritual which we moderns so superciliously treat. It was reserved for the late Epistle to the Hebrews for the Christian Church to learn that it could dispense with that stay of the paternal religion.

The Hebrew cult is of tremendous interest to the archæologist; it is of equal value to the student of religious thought and life. For in this religion which issued so loftily, whether we consider later Judaism or Christianity, we can mark stage by stage the growth of a wonderful germ, in part struggling with, in part submitting to, outward forms which descended to the utmost superstition, transforming them and yet compromising with them where essentials were not concerned. It was the cult which conserved that religion for us. And in preserving its cult that religion consciously recognized that its truth was not a pure philosophy or an abstract ethic but a religious life for a people as a whole, to be incorporated in forms and symbols of the world.

I pass finally to that phase of the Hebrew religion which regards man's relation to his God in the prospect of the end of things, what is called eschatology. In our field this falls into two categories: the thought concerning "the latter days," to use the Biblical term, as they concerned the community as a whole; and the expectations concerning the final fate of the individual.

It is the former idea which bulks in the Old Testament. From the beginning throughout it is a volume of expectations; we mark this in the ancient Blessings attributed to Jacob and Moses, the antique cycle put in Balaam's mouth, as well as in the later Apocalyptists. The historical sense in that religion concerned itself equally with the future as with the past, for if the past had a meaning, so the future was in a sense intelligible, was logically discoverable; this is an element in the pre-

dictive phase of Prophetism. And this expectation was first of all and always primarily national; for Yahwe was the God of Israel and Israel's life was bound up in his eternity. The expectation of the future assumes every variety of form and has been an inexhaustible treasure-house for all religion since. Ancient dreams of a Golden Age survived; to these the monarchy and national pride gave the touch of personal loyalty and enthusiasm in the figure of the Messiah of the house of David; the thought was uncertain as between a Messianic line or a single, almost mystical person. The prosaic age after the Exile was content with the prospect of a sacred asylum land, protected by Deity in its absolute holiness. Transcendental features were introduced, as in the idea that there was to be a supernatural elevation of the land, that it might become a veritable Mountain of God (Is. 2: 1ff, etc.). By the hierarchy and the Hasmonæan house the Messianic idea was suppressed as far as possible, to live in the under-currents of popular and religious thought. And when the world's pressure became too hard, and a new order was imperatively demanded, the Apocalyptists revealed a new heaven and a new earth, with a strange mingling of transcendental and earthly elements. Daniel sees the Son of Man brought before the Ancient of Days in the heavens; the seer meant Israel, but religion turned the figure into that of a supernatural Messiah.

In view of this elaborate development of thought which was ready with a new vision for every emergency of the national life, it is most strange to mark the utter absence until a late day of any form of an adequate idea of personal immortality—a concept which marks all higher religion and which had its remarkable flowering in the neighboring religion of Egypt. There was only the ancient animistic view of belief in the survival of the dead as shades in dreary Sheol, without real life or

merited retribution. The Sadducees and Samaritans continued this comfortless creed into the Christian era. The absence of belief in a real immortality may be explained negatively by the persistence with which orthodoxy set itself against all mortuary cults, which with all their comfort and transport involved superstitions intolerable to the religion of the Living God (*e.g.,* Is. 8:19). And the Jew showed his fealty to his religion by sticking to that faith though it brought him no hope that he should live forever. Only in late books and most rarely is there any certain reference to immortality, as in Daniel's assertion of "the resurrection of some to everlasting life and of some to everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

The Jew did not learn the individual hope through magical rites, as did the Egyptian, nor through mystery rites like the Greek, but in a way peculiar to the character of his religion, the keynote of which was personal experience. It was the immediate personal, and we may say mystical, experience of him who is called "my God," and "the God of my life" (Ps. 42), that gave the pious Israelite the sense not so much of immortality as of eternal relationship with his God. The bond with the Living God was the guarantee of an unbroken fellowship. A few utterances breathe this mystical logic of revelation. Job's spirit faints when he rises to the unreachable thought that "apart from my flesh I shall see God" (Job. 19:25–27). A Psalmist sings: "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol . . . Thou wilt show me the path of life. In thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:10f). And another Psalmist: "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied, when I wake, with thy likeness" (17:15). And yet another: "Thou shalt guide with me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (73:24f). He is a soul which declares it had en-

tered into the "mysteries" of God (v. 17). And for another saint God will be found of him even in hell: "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there" (139:8). It is with these spiritual apperceptions of eternal life, and not with the mere animistic semi-physical notions of continued animation, that the intensity of the Jewish and Christian belief in a fulness of life hereafter with God and his saints is related. It is eternal life, not immortality, a continuity of the relationship with God which the quantity of time cannot dissolve.

Such is this strange religion. It abounds in inner antinomies, it runs against the usual processes of religious thought. It defies philosophy. It is the riddle of the student of religion. He may whittle it down to its lowest terms, finding in it the most primitive forms of religion common to every folk. But it will not be explained in that way. If it has its feet on the earth, it holds its head in the heavens.

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# CHAPTER V

## THE RELIGION OF THE VEDA

BY FRANKLIN EDGERTON

THE Veda is the collective name given to the most ancient literature of India. It is at the same time the sacred literature of the orthodox Hindus. For many centuries the Brahmans, and those Hindus of lower caste who believed with them, have regarded the Veda as holy, inspired revelation; not the work of any man, nor created in time and space, but divinely revealed in fabulously ancient times to holy and semi-divine seers, called rishis, through whom it was made known to mankind.

When we speak of the religion of the Veda, however, we do not mean the religion of the later Hindus who made the Veda their Bible. That religion is called Brahmanism. We mean instead the contemporary religion which we find displayed in the Veda itself, the religion of the composers of the Veda; which is a very different thing.

We speak of the Veda as a unit, and compare it to the Bible. But if even the Bible is unified only by the pious faith of the believer this is much more emphatically true of the Veda. The Veda is a great literature rather than a book; a literature of vast and indefinite extent. And there is no recognized canon of authenticity in the case of the Veda. The composition of the works included in the Veda extended over many centuries; and in the later periods the question what is Vedic and what is not becomes increasingly difficult. Fortunately, it is also increasingly unimportant.

There are certain recognized types of literature into which all Vedic works are divided. In order to be Vedic, any work must at least *claim* to belong to one of these

types. They are: 1. The Samhitās or "Collections" of mantras or "sacred utterances." These are the oldest and most basic parts of the Veda. There are primarily four of these Samhitās; but each of the four exists, or else originally did exist, in several more or less different recensions, cultivated in different priestly schools. The four recognized Samhitās, or types of Samhitā, are: (a) the Rig-veda, consisting mainly of hymns of praise and prayer intended to be used at the sacrifices to the various gods: (b) the Atharva-veda, consisting mostly of incantations designed to be used in connection with magic rites for the attainment of all manner of natural human desires, both innocent and sinister; (c) the Yajur-veda, consisting of sacrificial formulæ and litanies, exclusively intended for use at certain important sacrificial ceremonies; (d) the Sāma-veda, consisting of chants, and also purely ritual in application. 2. The second grand division of the Vedic literature consists of what are called the Brāhmanas. They are theological text-books, like the Jewish Talmud, explaining from the priestly standpoint the texts found in the Samhitās, and the rites with which they were connected. 3. The third division consists of the Āranyakas or "forest-books," and the Upanishads or "intimate, secret expositions." Both of these were originally appendices to the Brāhmanas. But the Upanishads soon acquired an independent existence and value, owing to the distinctive character and importance of their contents. They contain the first extensive speculations in philosophy known in India. As such they are at the same time the culmination of the higher thought of the Vedic period, and the foundation on which all the philosophic speculation of later India ultimately rests.

Chronologically there are vast differences in different parts of the Veda. We do not know how old the oldest parts of the Rig-veda are; we may guess, perhaps, that they go back to about 2000 B.C. Vedic composition

stretches from about that time down almost or quite to the Christian era, in which the later Upanishads are placed.

There is room in this long period of time for extensive variations and developments in religion. And, in fact, the religion of the early Vedic works differs enormously from that of the later ones. But that is not all. Radically different types of religion appear to have existed side by side in some periods; and at times we find signs of curious and puzzling blends between them. We ought really to speak of the "religions"—instead of "religion"—of the Veda.

At the very outset the student of Indian religions is struck by a peculiar feature which may be said to remain through all time, in general, characteristic of them all. Namely: on the intellectual side they are free, speculative, active, receptive, and not dogmatically crystallized. Hence on the one hand the bewilderingly Protean forms which most Indian religions assume, seeming to defy any consistent and logical arrangement of their intellectual beliefs; and on the other hand, the striking tolerance which they show to new ideas and even to rival contemporary sects. But if Hindu religions are free in thought, they are anything but free in action. To be religiously correct is to live correctly; it matters little what you think. Proper observances and performances seem to be the essence of religion in India, rather than an orthodox system of belief. The Hindus are intellectually tolerant, but they are intolerant and narrow in their insistence on formal rites and actions.

There is a well-known and prominent concept of Vedic ethics, about which I wish space permitted me to speak at length, but which I must at least mention because it so strikingly illustrates this point. Right living, according to the Rig-veda, is living in accordance with the *rita*. The *rita* means the Way of the Universe; it is essen-

tially the Tao of the Chinese. All the established events of the visible world are parts of the *rita*, or take place in accordance with it. And the whole duty of man is to govern his life after the pattern of this cosmic law. It is a really noble concept, and might have been made the basis for a truly inspiring moral system. But in the hands of the Vedic poets the *rita* becomes little more than an apotheosis of the system of sacrifice around which Rigvedic religion centers. To live in accordance with the *rita* one must perform all the ceremonies of the cult, and little more. That is practically the whole duty of man.

This cult, which is the be-all and end-all of the hymns which devote themselves to it, presents itself to us in the Vedic hymns in anything but a primitive form. It appears there as the last precipitate of centuries of complicated development.

The primitive, prehistoric ancestors of the Vedic Aryans (that is the name by which the authors of the hymns call themselves) had a religion which may be called a naturalistic polytheism, or animism. Man saw in all nature constant manifestations of volitional acts, which he interpreted in terms of his own acts. He inferred that whatever went on in the world was due to the conscious activity of spirits—sentient beings more or less like his fellow-men. All animate and inanimate objects, all natural processes, and even abstractions of qualities or activities as such, were naively conceived as being, or as inhabited by, spirits—that is, sentient beings capable of volitional acts.

The prehistoric Aryan dealt with these powers, which he supposed existed in the world about him, in the two ways which are familiar in primitive religions the world over, namely, by devotional propitiation, and by compulsory magic. My position in this course makes it unnecessary for me to take time to dwell on these two

methods, or to analyze their relationship to each other; you already know what they mean; and in Aryan religion they bear the aspect of ultimate and irreducible data (which is not saying that one may not in fact have developed out of the other). It appears that the primitive Aryan undertook to control by magic, and so to make subject to his will, those spiritual agencies which he thought he could so control; while the more powerful spirits—gods, if you like—he sought to propitiate by sacrifices, thus securing their assistance by winning their good will, since he felt he had not the power to compel them.

Since very early prehistoric times these sacrificial rites of propitiation were accompanied by spoken words. Their purpose, as we still see clearly from the hymns of the Rig-veda, was to call the attention of the gods to the offering, and invite them to enjoy it. At probably an equally early time, the magic rites were also provided with spoken charms or incantations, although here the motive cannot have been the same, since in many of them, at least, no sacrifice was offered and no deity was invoked to aid. But in any case the original meaning of the words spoken, even at the sacrifice—their function as an invitation to the gods—soon became obscured, or was relegated to the background. Before historic times, the invocation or "hymn," as we may now call it, had come through ancient custom to be regarded as an integral and very necessary part of the religious performance; an end in itself, just as much as the actual sacrifice which it accompanied. One is no more and no less important than the other.[1]

[1] For example, the hymns of the Rig-veda show clearly that they themselves go back to a type of invocations to the gods. Nevertheless, the consciousness of this fact was so faint in the authors' minds that they felt it necessary to create a special class of hymns of invocation (called 'āprī hymns'), whose sole and express purpose is to invite the gods to the service; that is, to the sacrifice *and* the accompanying hymns of praise and prayer, now felt as a kind of offerings in themselves.

Originally it appears that any person was qualified to engage in sacrifices and magic performances, and to recite the accompanying hymns or charms. To a certain extent, indeed, this was true even in the historic Vedic period. Down to its very end there were some simple domestic rites of sacrifice which every Aryan might, or even had to, perform. And certainly many magic rites could be performed by anyone. But all such matters quickly become traditional, and it is then required that they be performed precisely in accord with inherited usage; else they may fail of the desired result. Accordingly, ordinary people continued to perform for themselves only such rites as could conveniently be performed by anyone, by reason of their simplicity or regularity. And for the performance of the more occasional or elaborate ceremonies, long before the times of the earliest Vedic literature people began more and more to call to their aid religious specialists, priests or medicine-men, who, of course, came into existence as a class in response to this natural demand. These priests and magic-masters made it their business to advise and assist those who would engage in any religious performance. And in the case of the more complicated ones, the participation of these persons became so usual that in the times of the Rig-veda it was gradually coming—if it had not already come—to be felt as a necessity to the proper observance of the rites. Thus, finally, the priests became the definite custodians of the important ceremonies of the Aryan cult.

They strengthened their hold on them, whether consciously or unconsciously, by means of the ever-increasing elaboration with which they, or a certain group of them, surrounded the rites they employed. There were, of course, priests and priests; just as there were rites and rites. The priests of the fire-cult, or of a certain fire-cult, seem to have become the recognized aristocracy of the priesthood, even in prehistoric times. For it had early

become fashionable to pour the articles of food and drink, which were the most usual sacrificial offerings, into fire.[2] The fire that consumed the offerings became thereby specially sacred; and the ritual of the fire offering began to be distinguished, by those who practised it, as a particularly holy and pious performance. It naturally followed that the fire-ritual soon became especially elaborate, and its priests especially respected.

There was another very ancient special cult, distinguished not by the method of presenting the offering but by the offering itself: the cult of the sacred drink Soma. The common ancestors of the Vedic Hindus and the Persians had offered this beverage, and had even deified the drink itself; it appears in the Avesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrian Persians, under the name of Haoma. This is the same word as the Vedic Soma, which likewise is both beverage and god. It was a highly prized intoxicating liquor obtained by a pressing process from the shoots of a plant which cannot now be identified. Among Iranians and Hindus alike it was regarded as the most acceptable means of gratifying the gods. One entire book of the Rig-veda (the ninth) is devoted to hymns to this divine drink. The poets never weary of singing its praises.

Now it is an interesting fact, and one of the highest importance in the development of Vedic religion, that the fire-priests, or a group of them, succeeded at an early time in capturing or assimilating this soma-cult, and making it the centre of their most ambitious and pretentious ceremonies. In fact, the soma-cult became a kind of hallmark of distinction for a certain class of fire-ceremonies, which distinguished them from their less aristocratic relatives. It was especially in connection with them that one

[2] Other methods of disposing of the offerings were known, and were practised to some extent even in historic times; but they were of comparatively slight importance.

group of fire-priests succeeded in appropriating to themselves a predominant position in the religious life of the Vedic Aryans.

Among these fire-priests who cultivated the soma-cult there was elaborated a ceremonial which required the use not of one, but of three sacred fires at every sacrificial performance, and which was more complicated in other ways also. Not only more complicated, but more expensive; and thereby hangs a tale. This three-fire ritual, centering about the soma-sacrifice, acquired by the times of the Rig-veda such a degree of elaborateness and consequent expensiveness that the ordinary poor man could not in the nature of things engage in it. Only princes and wealthy men could afford it. It was, therefore, of necessity not required for the performance of the simpler daily rites which every pious Aryan had to perform; nor for such occasional rites as birth, marriage, and funeral ceremonies, which, though not of periodic occurrence, necessarily formed part of the religious duty of all the people.

The Rig-veda is, in general, a hymn-book for use at these three-fire ceremonies. That is, its hymns were, in the main, composed for the express purpose of being chanted at these elaborate rites, soma-sacrifices and others, which had to be performed with the three sacred fires. These hymns were composed by the fire-soma-priests themselves, for their own use. They are therefore a hieratic literature in a very extreme sense. Not only do they reflect constantly the class interests and the class viewpoint of their priestly authors, but they devote themselves exclusively to this ultra-hieratic phase of religion, the religion centering about the three-fire cult. Not only are secular matters not primarily considered at all, but even those more popular religious performances are ignored, which did not require this elaborate ritual, and which formed the staple religion of the great mass of the

Aryan people.[3] In short, let me make this point very emphatic: the religion portrayed by the great mass of the hymns of the Rig-veda is very far from being the religion of the Vedic Aryans. It is not even the religion of any considerable section of them. Nay, it is probably not the *whole* religion of any of them. The group of rites with which it is (one may practically say) exclusively concerned was itself a sort of work of supererogation—not absolutely required of anyone, and never performed at all except by the aristocracy of the people.

The theory of this hieratic cult was a very simple one of commercial bargaining between gods and men. It is frequently stated in pretty bald terms in the texts themselves. "Give to me; I give to thee." "Enjoy the soma, satisfy thyself with it; then turn thy mind to the giving of riches," says a Rigvedic poet. The gods want sacrifices, of food and drink, accompanied by hymns, which are by this time an integral part of the sacrifice, and in which the gods take an æsthetic pleasure. These things it is in the power of men to provide. Men, on the other hand, want wealth, long life, and the discomfiture of their enemies. Such boons are in the gift of the mighty gods to whom the three-fire soma-cult devotes itself. The whole transaction is then a commercial one. The priests are the middle-men. And their commission is the sacrificial fee (dakshinā), which was a very necessary part of every sacrifice; without it no sacrifice is complete. The very human wants of the priests are, in fact, quite prominent in most of the hymns; we are seldom allowed to forget for long that the poet-priests are after all men, and that they make their living by offering these sacrifices and chanting these hymns.

As might be expected, and as I have already hinted,

[3] Nearly all of the few Rigvedic hymns of which this is not true are later additions to the collection as it stands; though this does not necessarily mean that the hymns themselves are late.

the gods to whom this aristocratic and hieratic cult addresses its sacrifices and hymns are a somewhat select company. Although they do not form any sharply defined class, it may be said of them in general that they are all great and powerful gods; and most of them are originally personifications of major powers of nature. The powers of the sun, the moon, the sky, the rain, and so on, are the naturalistic elements which would most easily impress the consciousness of primitive man. They seem most obviously to have the capacity of working man's weal or woe. Minor spirits are nearly or quite ignored in this hieratic cult of the Rig-veda; they find a place in the lower religion of the people.

But, very significantly as it seems to me, the most transparent personifications among the hieratic deities are not so much naturalistic as ritualistic entities. The very pantheon is made to center more and more about the sacrifice, preparing the way for the later stage in which the sacrifice absorbs the whole content of religion. We have already alluded to the fact that the soma-drink, the most aristocratic offering, becomes the god Soma, one of the most prominent of the Rigvedic gods.[4] Another god of prime importance is Agni, who is, most transparently, Fire; the word *agni* is the common noun for "fire." A naturalistic concept, of course: and, indeed, there is no Vedic god of whom it is more true that the poets think of him all the time as both element and personal god. They even at times recognize him in the sun and the lightning, in the forest fire, and wherever else fiery elements are found. Nevertheless, he is to them first and

[4] Later Soma is identified with the moon; but this seems to me, as to most scholars, a secondary development. Professor Hillebrandt, however, believes that the identification goes back to the earliest times. The question is not important for my present point; there is no doubt that, whatever Soma was originally, most of the Rigvedic poets think of him primarily as the deified sacrificial drink; so that he is a primarily ritualistic god to them.

foremost the sacred fire of sacrifice; the Messenger between men and gods, who carries the offerings to heaven, or who by his beacon-flame attracts the gods to them. Countless are the epithets and descriptions of Agni which refer clearly to his ritualistic character. They overwhelm and almost obliterate references to him in his mere naturalistic guise. It is to this deified Fire of *Sacrifice*, not to fire in general, that one-fifth of all the hymns of the Rig-veda are addressed. And the same is true of another of the transparent personifications in the Vedic pantheon, the goddess Dawn, Ushas. Again the word means simply Dawn; but again the concept is a thoroughly ritualistic one, as the hymns show. Dawn is the goddess who gives the signal for the morning sacrifice to start; who wakes the pious and generous man that pays the priest for the sacrifice (she is besought to let the stingy man sleep on!); who is the mother of Agni, because the Fire of sacrifice is kindled at dawn.[5]

There are, to be sure, other gods, and some of equal importance with these, who cannot be said to be personifications of powers inherently related to the ritual. I think, however, that it is no accident that we find it difficult to say just what these other gods do personify. They are for the most part gods whose original nature was already forgotten, probably, even in the times of the Rigvedic poets themselves. Some of them are allowed a somewhat questionable position in the hieratic cult in spite of their non-ritualistic character. For one reason or another their position in the general Aryan pantheon made it impossible for the hieratic cult to ignore them; but it treats them in a rather step-motherly fashion. There is, for instance, the majestic Varuna—perhaps the leading god of the prehistoric Indo-Iranians, as he at

[5] The ritualistic character of this interesting goddess was first clearly shown by Professor Bloomfield, in his book, *The Religion of the Veda*, pages 66 ff.

least became the leading god of the historic Persians (under the name of Ahura Mazda). It is declared in the Veda, too, that he is the greatest of gods, the guardian of the world-order, the righteous king and judge of the universe, the punisher of all evil. In short, he is described as a veritable Hindu Yahweh. Yet he has very few hymns addressed to him. His share in the hieratic cult was insignificant compared to the grandeur attributed to him. And his prestige waned as time went on. Why? Apparently because he had no special connection with the three-fire ritual.

Most of the old naturalistic gods are treated thus, or worse, in the Rigvedic cult. But there is one god who has managed to make himself the favorite of the whole pantheon in the Rig-veda, at least judging by the number of his hymns, and who yet was not originally ritualistic at all, as it seems. This is Indra,[6] to whom about a fourth of all the Rigvedic hymns are addressed. He is as different from the other gods as can well be imagined. He is a god of warriors, not of priests. In fact, he is a perfect impersonation of all that we should imagine the rude, half-barbarous Aryan chieftains of the time to have been, magnified to superhuman size. He is an ideal patron saint for the men of war of that time. He is boisterous, ferocious, and boastful. He is an enormous eater and especially drinker; he is the chief drinker of the soma, the sacred tipple, of which he swallows whole lakes. Most of all, his strength and warlike prowess are inconceivably great; the poets lose themselves completely in trying to describe them. He gets thoroughly drunk on soma, and

[6] His origin is obscure; but he almost certainly represented some power of nature. The traditional interpretation makes him a god of the thunder-storm. Of late Hillebrandt's theory that he was a sun-god has been making some headway against the older one. In any case he is the most thoroughly anthropomorphized of all the Vedic gods, and therefore the least transparent. We can hardly imagine that the poets thought of him in terms of any power of nature, as a rule.

then goes out and slaughters the demons by the hundreds. Of course he also helps his worshipers in battle against their enemies, the heathen Dāsas, the dark-skinned aborigines whom the Aryans subdued. In short, Indra is the national war-god of the conquering Aryans, especially of their fighting chieftains. Now we must remember that it was just these chieftains and leaders of the people who kept the hieratic cult in operation. Its elaborate and expensive rites depended on their munificence for support; and the priests' living came from the rites. Need it surprise us, then, that Indra was made the very head and front of the whole cult, the chief beneficiary of the soma-sacrifice, its greatest performance?

Thus, as finally constituted, the soma-sacrifice comes to mean almost the same thing as a sacrifice to Indra. Indra, though originally not peculiar to the three-fire ritual, becomes the very most typical exponent of it, successfully rivaling Agni, the sacred Fire in person. And in the last resort the religion of the great mass of the hymns of the Rig-veda appears not as a naturalistic but as a *ritualistic* polytheism. The importance of a god depends not on his natural qualities and powers but first and foremost on his position in the hieratic ritual, around which everything centers.

The logical conclusion—or, as one is tempted to call it, the *reductio ad absurdum*—of this tendency is found not in the Vedic hymns, but in the pure ritualism of the Brāhmanas, the later liturgic texts. Even in the hymns, however, the way is marked out. The original idea of the sacrifice as an appeal to the good will of the gods tends to become obliterated. The gods begin to be thought of as dependent on the sacrifice for their powers, nay even for their very existence. The sacrifice no longer persuades, but compels them. The correct sacrificer owns the gods; they can not choose but grant his wish. Finally, after the gods have been reduced to this position of help-

less agents of the sacrifice, it becomes apparent that they are no longer needed at all. If the sacrifice can absolutely control the gods, why can it not just as well work the desired result without them? Accordingly, in many parts of the Brāhmanas the sacrifice (to whom? is a question that cannot be rationally answered) is itself a direct cosmic force of the first magnitude. If religion started with magic, it has now completed the circle and returned to magic again. For what is it but pure magic, if by correct performance of a ritual act a man can not only obtain any desired boon, but directly control the operations of all cosmic forces? This is the twilight of Vedic ritualism; it is preparing to die of its own inner dry-rot. Every vestige of devotion has left it. A system of sacrifices with none to sacrifice to is too absurd to live.

Meanwhile, let us not forget that this hieratic ritualistic religion of the three-fire ceremonies, centering in the soma-cult, probably played a very small rôle in the religious life of the people as a whole. It was, as we saw, a supererogatory system, which in the nature of things could concern only the upper classes of society. All the time there existed a whole complex of simpler rites, more or less engaged in by the whole people, even by the devotees of the three-fire cult, which latter ignored but did not by any means oppose them. There was no rigid distinction between the two systems. In the popular cult as well there were many fire sacrifices; only these were simple and required but one sacred fire instead of three.[7] But the popular religion included a vast deal that was not included in the hieratic three-fire cult. It revered many gods, godlings, and spirits whom the other ignored. It was still primitively animistic; every object, animate or inanimate, was or contained a potential deity. In it, too,

[7] Some ceremonies belonged to both cults, and could be performed with either one or three fires, and with a simpler or more elaborate ritual, according to the inclinations and the social and financial standing of the sacrificer.

we find magical practices, both good and bad, "white" and "black," in full swing. Moreover, it contained ceremonies connected with birth, marriage, and death, and with other standard and regular occurrences in the life of every man, which for that very reason found no place in the aristocratic and hieratic three-fire cult. The great repository of materials for this popular religion is the Atharva-veda, which was at the beginning not hieratic but popular. From it we can get an astonishingly complete and very interesting account of the real fundamental religious beliefs and practices of the Vedic Aryans, much better than from the hieratic Rig-veda;[8] although for historic reasons the "higher" hieratic religion generally occupies the attention of students to a much greater extent, since mainly out of it grew the later higher systems of religion and philosophy.[9]

But I must resist the temptation to say more about the homely but perennially interesting popular religion of the Atharva-veda.

Out of the ritualistic polytheism of the Rig-veda there

[8] In later times the hieratic cult tried to save itself from dying of inanition by assimilating such of the popular rites as were not too glaringly out of sympathy with it. The Rig-veda itself, in its present form, contains marriage and funeral hymns, and even magic charms. But their position—mostly in the tenth book, a late addition to the collection—shows that they did not originally belong to it. Later many other popular rites were adopted and made part of the hieratic system, although they were kept carefully separated from the original parts of the system; they were treated in special ritual books, the Grihya Sūtras. The fact that it is in these, and not in the strictly hieratic Çrāuta Sūtras, that marriage and funeral ceremonies are treated, confirms us in regarding the marriage and funeral hymns of the Rig-veda as intrusions in the hieratic collection. This subject requires for adequate treatment more space than I have at my disposal.

[9] Sectarian Hinduism, however, with its cults of Vishnu and Çiva, has its chief source rather in popular beliefs and practices. Traces of the beginnings of the Çiva cult at least are found in the Atharva-veda. Vishnu is indeed a Rigvedic deity (as for that matter Çiva is, too, under the name of Rudra); but he is a very minor one. His later apotheosis into the Supreme God of his sectarians can only partly be traced in later Vedic texts. The subject is very intricate and obscure. We shall return to it briefly in Chapter VII.

developed, as we saw, a pure ritualism in the Brāhmanas, which make the sacrifice itself the whole thing, practically to the exclusion of the gods to whom the sacrifice after all must have been made. By the side of this logical monstrosity there was developing out of the same soil a growth of much more promise. In quite a considerable minority of the hymns of the Rig-veda itself, we find signs of a new view of the gods, to which we may give the name of Ritualistic Henotheism. By henotheism is meant a religious point of view in which the old plurality of gods still exists, but is mitigated, so to speak. It is as if the religious consciousness, when dealing for the moment with any particular god, felt it as an insult to his dignity to admit the competition of other deities. And so, either the particular god of the moment is identified with all the other gods, or rather, they are identified with him, *ad majorem gloriam;*[10] or else he is given attributes which in strict logic could not be given to any but a sole monotheistic deity. Thus at different moments Indra or Varuna or Agni is said to be the sole lord of the universe and of all beings, the creator, preserver, and animator of the world, the ruler of gods and men, and so on.[11] We are, however, still dealing with a ritualistic religion; Vedic henotheism is rooted in the ritual. It clearly originated in the ritual treatment of various gods. As each god came upon the stage in the procession of rites, he was accorded impartially this increasingly extravagant praise, until finally everything that could be said of all the gods collectively is said of each of them in turn, individually.

Now, however, the henotheistic position was too glaringly illogical to prevail for long. Such things as the creation of the world and the overlordship of all crea-

[10] As in R. V. 5.3, where Agni is successively identified with all the chief gods of the pantheon, as if they were all but manifestations of Agni. In other hymns other gods are similarly glorified.

[11] One of the best examples of his type is the Indra hymn R. V. 2.12.

tures could in reality be predicated of only one personality. But which one? There was no more reason for singling out one of the old ritualistic gods than another. All had been tarred with the same stick. The problem evidently occupied the attention of the most advanced minds of the age. And already in the Rig-veda there are a number of attempts to answer it. Two groups of ideas may be distinguished in the answers. The one set of ideas is developing towards a tentative Monotheism—a belief in one sole or at least supreme God; the other towards a tentative Monism—a belief in one primal and supreme, but not theistic, principle. Both have their roots in the ritualistic henotheism to which we have been referring. And the two together furnish the keynotes to all the higher thought of the later Vedic periods. The best of the Upanishads only elaborate and expand and combine and discuss ideas which are found in essence in the quasi-monotheistic and monistic hymns of the Rig-veda.

One attempt to cut the Gordian knot of Henotheism resulted in the setting up of some new and purely abstract, non-ritualistic, but still personal, figure, and predicating of it, and of it alone, all the things which had been henotheistically predicated of Indra, Agni, or Varuna. The new deity is differently named in different compositions of this school; Prajāpati, the Lord of Creatures,[12] or Viçvakarman, the All-maker,[13] and so on. In each case it is he, and he alone, who created the world and now supports and rules it, and the like. Yet it is still a God who does this; a kind of Yahweh or Allah he might well have become, if this idea had taken permanent root in Hindu soil. It is an abortive attempt at Monotheism, not yet Monism.

More significant for the later history of Indian thought is the tentative Monism which rivals the mono-

[12] R.V.10.121.
[13] R. V. 10.81 and 82.

theistic movement even in the Rig-veda, though only in one or two hymns, notably the famous 10.129. That remarkable hymn derives the universe not from any god or gods, monotheistic or otherwise. It knows no Yahweh or Allah, any more than Indra or Varuna. It definitely brushes aside all gods; in fact, it says in terms that they are all of late and secondary origin, and know nothing about the real beginnings of things. The First Principle of this hymn is Tad Ekam—"That One"; neuter gender, lest some theologian should get hold of it and insist on falling down and worshiping it. It is wholly impersonal, and non-theistic. It is furthermore uncharacterizable and indescribable; without qualities or attributes—without even negative characteristics; it was "neither existent nor non-existent." Yet other than It there was nothing at all.

This monistic concept is nothing else than the Brahman of the Upanishads, the One without a second, of which, as the later texts say, nothing can be said except "No, no"—it is not this, it is not that. To apply any description to it is to limit and bound that which is limitless and boundless. "It is inconceivable, for it cannot be conceived; unknowable, for it cannot be known." This philosophic scepticism, too, is clearly heralded in the last verses of the Rigvedic hymn 10.129; there is no one that can know the beginnings of things.

It should be made clear that neither the quasi-monistic passages of the Rig-veda, nor those of the later Vedic texts, down through the Upanishads, which contain the final consummation of Vedic thought, hold fast to this or any other definite and systematic idea. This idea and many others appear and disappear moment by moment, and constantly jostle each other. Sometimes they are more or less synthetized, but more often they are left baldly unreconciled side by side.

We sometimes hear that the identification of the

One Being with the *ātman* or human soul is the unifying thought of the Upanishads. It is true that the Upanishads proclaim clearly enough this idea—which, by the way, like practically every other doctrine found in the older Upanishads, goes back to the times of the Vedic hymns.[14] Says the Upanishadic teacher Uddālaka Āruni to his son:[15] "What that subtle essence is, a having-that-as-its-nature is this universe; that is the Real, that is the Soul, that art Thou, Çvetaketu!" And even more clearly and magnificently the great teacher Yājñavalkya declares:[16] "That which rests in all things and is distinct from all things, which all things know not, of which all things are the body (that is, the material representation or form), which controls all things within, that is thy Self (ātman), the immortal Inner Controller . . . The Unseen Seer, the Unheard Hearer, the Unthought Thinker, the Unknown Knower. There is no other Seer; there is no other Hearer; there is no other Thinker; there is no other Knower. This is thy Self, the immortal Inner Controller. Whatever is other than this is evil."

These are brave words. And they did not fail to bring forth fruit. For they later became the kernel, the unifying thought, of the Vedānta, one of the greatest philosophic systems of later India—perhaps of the world. In the last sentence of the quotation, hinting at the evilness of all that is not the One, that is of all empiric existence, we have a foretaste of the Hindu pessimistic view of life. But this, as well as the doctrine of transmigration, concerns more especially post-Vedic Hindu thought; I shall have more to say of both of these subjects in my next lecture.

What I want now to emphasize in closing is the fact

[14] Its beginnings are discernible in the Rig-veda (cf. R. V. 10.90), and still more clearly in the Atharva-veda (cf. A. V. 10.8.44).

[15] Chāndogya Upanishad 6.8 and following.

[16] Brihad Āranyaka Upanishad 3.7.

that, in my opinion, there is no unifying thought in the Upanishads. There is no philosophic or religious *system* in them, although there are steps towards, or fragments of, many philosophic and religious systems. That is, many systems could be constructed or developed out of selected passages in them; and, in fact, this was done in later India. But I think we misunderstand the Upanishads if we try to systematize them. Just as in the old Vedic hymns we find all of these illustrated in at least equal fulness ritualistic, henotheistic, monotheistic, and monistic—so we find all of these illustrated in at least equal fullness in the Upanishads. They (or at least the older ones) contain nothing, or hardly anything, essentially new; they merely carry on further all the numerous lines of thought started in the Vedic hymns—the lines of thought whose interrelationship I have tried briefly to sketch. The intellectual average of the Upanishads is higher than that of the hymns, because they are later and more advanced; but even the lowest depths of Vedic ritualism can be illustrated by Upanishad passages. They are, in their essential spirit, tentative, struggling, searching; not dogmatic, final, or positive. They are never satisfied with any degree of attainment in the formulation of their thoughts. Instead they are constantly searching for new points of view. With a restless yearning after truth which has perhaps never been surpassed and seldom equalled, they struggle towards peak after peak of mental achievement, only to abandon them unhesitatingly and unregretfully, in the hope of finding a higher peak beyond. Between the peaks they sometimes descend into what seem to us low swamps of the commonplace, and sometimes they relapse into states of mind which ought to have been long since forgotten; but who can live constantly on the heights? Absolute Truth is what they seek. If they do not find it, that is not their fault. It should rather be put down to their credit that they do

not delude themselves into thinking that they have found it permanently. Let him who has found it permanently cast the first stone at them!

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# CHAPTER VI

## BUDDHISM
### WITH AN ADDENDUM ON JAINISM
### BY FRANKLIN EDGERTON

BUDDHISM may properly be called a Protestant faith. It sprang up at a time when Hinduism in the wide sense —Indian thought as a whole—had since long passed the tentative stage of the old and genuine Upanishads. Those works were already enshrined with the still older Vedic hymns and the Brāhmanas as works of sacred revelation. The Brahmanical system was pretty well established in its classic form, as we shall try to describe it in our next lecture. The common characteristic features of the higher Hindu religious and philosophical thought of later times were all firmly established. In fact, we shall presently see that Buddhism never thought of questioning any of those intellectual features of the higher Hinduism. In that respect it presented nothing inherently new or heretical. Moralizing philosophers, like the Buddha, teaching doctrines leading to salvation through right knowledge or intuition, are found already in the Upanishads; and there are many such in later orthodox Hinduism.

Nor is there anything in the Buddhist attitude towards the brahmanical rites and ceremonies which made it new or necessarily heretical. This may seem strange; for certainly the Buddhists absolutely threw overboard all sacrifices and other features of the Brahmans' cult. But all the monistic passages of the Veda, and especially those of the Upanishads, preach contempt for all earthly things, or at least indifference to them. And they do not scruple to include, sometimes in definite terms, the priestly cult among these earthly things, not indeed as evil, but rather

as simply beneath the notice of the enlightened. Sacrifices, gifts, prayers, and so on are all nothing to the Upanishads in their loftiest moments. Likewise all the best of the later systems of Indian philosophy—Sānkhya, Yoga, Vāiçeshika, Vedānta—imply if they do not exactly preach a total neglect of the ritual.

But there is this difference between those systems on the one hand and Buddhism, as well as the rival Protestant sect of Jainism, on the other. The Upanishads, and all the orthodox Hindu systems, formally acknowledge the authority of the Vedas. In fact, more accurately, the Upanishads are themselves part of the Veda. They regard themselves, and are regarded in later times, as the culmination, the last word, the New Testament, of the Vedic religion. As Jesus said, "I came not to destroy but to fulfil," referring to the Mosaic law and the books of the Hebrew prophets; as Jesus, in altering or reversing in some points the previous religion of the Jews, regarded himself as only perfecting, and by no means as opposing, the Jewish religion; just so the Upanishads take the position that the Vedic religion is all right as far as it goes, but that its final consummation is the Upanishad doctrine. And so all the later orthodox Hindu systems at least formally recognize the authority of the Vedas, and pay lip-service to them, however inconsistent with them their real spirit may be.

The attitude of Buddhism and Jainism is wholly different. They definitely and in polemic terms reject the Vedas. Not only the Vedas, but the whole religious and even the social system of the Brahmans. Not that they reject the caste system (as they are sometimes erroneously said to have done); but they are not willing, as a rule, to admit the superiority of the Brahman caste, which was a fundamental social dogma of Brahmanism. Instead the Buddhists frequently, and often rather polemically, assert that the kshatriyas or nobles are the first

caste, instead of being second to the Brahmans, as they are in the Brahmanical scheme. The fact is that both Buddhism and Jainism sprang up among kshatriya or noble circles. The founders of both sects are reputed to have been kshatriyas; and the tradition, whether literally true or not, is certainly significant. Their first appeal was to kshatriyas, to nobles—although they sought to include all castes within their orders, and, in fact, found many ready converts among the Brahmans.

It is for these reasons, rather than because of the metaphysical, theological, or ethical views they maintained, that the Buddhists and Jains were and are regarded by the orthodox Hindus as heterodox, and excluded from the pale of Hinduism. Had they been willing to pay lip-homage to the Vedas, and especially to recognize the Brahman caste as the nominal leaders of society, they might have believed in anything they pleased and still passed as respectable, as did various other sects whose real opinions differ in no important respect (except these) from those of the Buddhists and Jains.

The Protestant attitude of the Buddhists and Jains towards Brahmanism is strikingly illustrated by the languages they used in their gospels. They rebelled against the Brahman theory that religion was only for the upper classes, a theory which finds expression in the well-known Brahmanical dogma that Çūdras and outcasts might not even hear or read the Vedas, the sacred texts, much less take part in the services of the ritual. Buddhism and Jainism were open to all castes and to those of no caste. And that their message might be intelligible to all mankind, they discarded the Sanskrit language, the artificial vehicle of Brahmanical learning and culture, and laid down the principle that their gospels should be preached in every land in the dialect of the land itself. So, whereas all the books of Brahmanical wisdom are in Sanskrit, which was no popular speech but had a position like

that of Latin in mediæval Europe, the earliest texts of the Buddhists and Jains were composed in popular dialects.

The Buddhists of the northern or Mahāyāna school did not keep to this practice, but in later times took up the use of Sanskrit, imitating the Brahmans. But the southern or Hīnayāna school kept closer to primitive Buddhism in this respect, as well as in respect of doctrines. It is the southern school that prevails to-day in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Cambodja, while the Buddhists of Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, and Korea adhere to the northern Mahāyāna. (In India proper Buddhism is now practically extinct.) The language in which the Southern Buddhist texts are written is then not Sanskrit, but an ancient popular dialect called Pāli. This is an Indian, not a Ceylonese, dialect; and we do not know just where it originally flourished as a spoken language. To be sure, it too has become in the course of time a literary or rather sacred and learned language, more or less like what Sanskrit was to the Brahmans. The Buddhist monks used it for writing and speaking even (occasionally) on non-religious subjects. But they never wholly severed themselves from the traditions of their religion, which demanded that the religion be presented to all peoples in their own popular idioms. For although the canon became too sacred to be translated into popular dialects, the monks composed extensive commentaries in the languages of the various countries to which they came. And these commentaries served the purpose of making the essence of the religion presentable to the common folk, though the sacred texts themselves were accessible only to the monks and the learned.

The Pāli literature of the Southern Buddhists contains, then, first and foremost, the sacred texts of the Buddhist religion, in the form accepted by this school; and secondly, an extensive literature (as yet not very fully explored by Europeans) of commentaries and other

works, mostly of a religious character, at least nominally. The sacred canon of the Buddhists is called in Pāli the Tipitaka (in Sanskrit Tripitaka), which means the Three Baskets or Collections. It consists, as the name indicates, of three grand divisions: first, the Vinaya Pitaka, or Discipline Basket, consisting primarily of rules for the behavior of the order of monks said to have been founded by the Buddha; secondly, the Sutta (Sanskrit Sūtra) Pitaka, or Sermon Basket, consisting in the first instance of addresses supposed to have been delivered by the Buddha, and of other utterances of his, with a not inconsiderable amount of other material, whose original right to be in the collection is at times questionable; and thirdly, the Abhidhamma (Sanskrit Abhidharma) Pitaka, sometimes, though questionably, rendered the Metaphysical Basket, which contains more technical and scholastic disquisitions on Buddhist dogmatics and on formal logic. All that we can say with an approach to certainty of the date of this canonical literature is that probably few if any changes have been introduced into it since a few centuries after Christ, while its oldest parts may well go back to the times of the Buddha himself, and may even contain some of his very words. His dates are computed on the basis of the best Buddhist tradition as approximately 560 to 480 B.C.

I have mentioned the chief particulars in which Buddhism differentiated itself sharply from the general run of Hindu systems. It is none the less true, in spite of these elements of Protestantism, that it remained a thoroughly Hindu sect. Its most fundamental dogmas—one might better say axioms or intellectual points of view—are common to all of the higher post-Vedic systems of Indian philosophy and religion. In order to understand Buddhism at all, it seems to me necessary at the start briefly to outline a few of these basic axioms. It is true that they are no more characteristic of Buddhism than of almost

all other Hindu sects; but it is none the less true that they are absolutely fundamental in Buddhism. I shall present them under three headings: first, pessimism; second, transmigration (or, as it is better to say in Buddhism, rebirth), with which is inseparably intertwined the doctrine familiarly known as karma or "deed;" and third, salvation or release.

1. PESSIMISM.—That all existence—at least all empiric existence in the ordinary sense—is evil, is taken for granted without question and almost without argument by all the great Hindu systems. Already in the Upanishads this belief is seen in process of development. But in them, or at least in the oldest of them, it is hardly expressed in a clear way. In them it usually takes the form of a depreciative view of the empiric world as contrasted with the One Ultimate Reality, whatever it may be called, Brahman or Atman or Sat (Existent) or the like. In their admiration of the perfection of the Absolute it seems to them that "Whatever is other than That is evil," as in the passage previously[1] quoted and in various similar passages. But this is still rather incidental, almost parenthetical. With the later Hindus it is a very different matter. Bred in their bone and marrow, and part of their inmost nature, is this belief that all life is inherently worthless and base and evil. What are commonly regarded as the pleasures of existence are not genuine pleasures. For one thing, many of them are or may be attended by pain, which, or the fear of which, either counterbalances or destroys the enjoyment of them. But besides this, all these so-called pleasures are, like everything that exists, transitory and undependable, subject to destruction at any moment; and when they are gone, the recollection of them leaves the misery of life darker than ever by contrast. Moreover, the creatures of this round of existence are so constructed that even a life

[1] Page 132 of this volume.

of perfect and continuous indulgence would pall at last; these joys, as they are vulgarly called, are all illusory and bring disgust in the end. Thus in brief do the Hindus, when they take the trouble to argue the point at all, defend their great thesis that whatever is (in the ordinary, empiric sense) is bad. This thesis is formally stated by the Buddhists in the first of the four great "Noble Truths" upon which their system rests, as we shall see presently.

(2) TRANSMIGRATION AND KARMA.—But if life is all evil, does not death bring release from it? By no means, say the Hindus. The way out is not so easy as that. Death is not cessation of existence. It is only passing from one existence into another. "Just as a caterpillar, when it comes to the end of a blade of grass, gathers itself up together (to go over to another grass-blade), even so this Spirit, when it has rid itself of this body and cast off ignorance, gathers itself up together (to go over into another body);" so speaks already an Upanishad text.[2] In fact, the history of the belief in rebirth after death goes back much further than the Upanishads. But I cannot here trace its interesting early development; it must suffice to say that the later Hindu doctrine of transmigration appears for the first time clearly stated in the Upanishads; and even there only tentatively, for older views still persist side by side with it. The Upanishads also begin to join with this doctrine of transmigration the old doctrine of retribution for good and evil deeds in a life after death. The belief in such retribution, in some form or other, is found all over the world, and various forms of it are found in different stages of Vedic religion. With the transference of the future life from a mythical other world to this earth, and with the extension or multiplication of it to an indefinite series of future lives more or less like the present life, the way is

[2] Brihad Āranyaka Upanishad 4.4.4.

prepared for the characteristically Hindu doctrine of karma or "deed." According to this doctrine, which all Hindus regard as axiomatic, the state of each existence of each individual is absolutely conditioned and determined by that individual's morality in previous existences. A man is exactly what he has made himself and what he therefore deserves to be. One of the earliest clear expressions of this view is found in this Upanishad passage:[3] "Just as (the Soul) is (in this life) of this or that sort; just as it acts, just as it operates, even so precisely it becomes (in the next life). If it acts well it becomes good; if it acts ill it becomes evil. As a result of right action it becomes what is good; as a result of evil action it becomes what is evil." In short, the law of the conservation of energy is rigidly applied to the moral world. Every action, whether good or bad, must of necessity have its result for the performer of the action. If in the present life a man is on the whole good, his next existence is better by just so much as his good deeds have outweighed his evil deeds. Better—that is, less painful; we must not forget that these are merely comparative terms, and that all existence, even the best, is really evil. Men of very exceptional virtues may make themselves gods; for there are gods, yes and heavens, many of them, according to the Hindu view. Only all the gods are strictly mortal and are just as much bound up in the chain of existences as are men. The life of the gods differs from life on earth only in that it is comparatively less wretched, and, to be sure, a little longer; but what is a few thousand years more or less in comparison with the infinity of æons over which the misery of existence stretches? Conversely, those men who are exceptionally wicked either are reborn as lower animals, or fall to one of the numerous hells which counterbalance the system of heavens. And all this is not carried out by

[3] Brihad Āranyaka Upanishad 4.4.6.

decree of some omnipotent and sternly just Power. It is a natural law. It operates of itself, just as much as the law of gravitation. It is therefore wholly dispassionate, neither merciful nor vindictive. It is absolutely inescapable; but at the same time it never cuts off hope. A man is what he has made himself; but by that same token he may make himself what he will. The soul tormented in the lowest hell may raise himself in time to the highest heaven, simply by doing right. Perfect justice is made the basic law of the universe. Opinions may differ as to the absolute truth of this theory—I am not discussing that; but as to its moral grandeur and perfection I really do not see how there can be a difference of opinion. How clumsy, as an instrument of moral retribution, seems in comparison with this the belief of our ancestors in a sharp separation of the "sheep" from the "goats" and a once-for-all Day of Judgment, with its final and unappealable decree and its sentence for all eternity!

Transmigration and retribution by karma are then, like pessimism, common features of Hinduism which are retained in Buddhism and made part of its fundamental verities. The Buddhist formulation of the chain of existence is found in the second of its four "Noble Truths," as we shall see later. This same formulation declares that the root of existence, and so of evil, is desire, based on ignorance. Because men do not know the truth, they cling with their desires to the false joys of existence; this causes them to perform acts, and these acts (karma) have, as we have seen, their necessary fruition in rebirth. Even this full statement is rooted in general Hinduism. Already in the Upanishads[4] we hear: "This Spirit of Man consists simply of desire. As is his desire, so is his resolve; as is his resolve, so is the deed (karma) that he does; as is the deed that he does, so is that (fate) which he attains unto." And again, the perfected soul

[4] Brihad Āranyaka Upanishad 4.4.7.

is that which "has no desires," [5] which "is beyond desire, has dispensed with evil, knows no fear, is free from sorrow." [6]

This unquestioning acceptance by Buddhism of the doctrines of transmigration and karma as basic axioms is all the more remarkable because of the Buddhistic attitude on the subject of the soul. Strange to say, the usual Buddhist view is that there is no soul at all, neither individual soul nor world soul. How then can there be transmigration? Transmigration in the literal sense, perhaps not; but there is rebirth, nevertheless. Each living being, according to Buddhism, is made up of five constituent elements, called in Pāli khandhas (Sanskrit skandhas), which compose his personality; there is no ego in any other sense. These elements resolve themselves at death; but nevertheless, in some way which the texts themselves admit to be "mysterious" and which is, in fact, quite inconceivable, they are compelled by the karma or actions of the individual in the preceding existence to reunite and form a new individual, who is, however, the very same as the old, because the karma is imperishable and keeps up the continuity of existence. Buddhism is very weak metaphysically; in fact, we shall see that in its best and most typical moods it declines to enter into metaphysics at all. It might better have stuck to this rule. The doctrine of the khandhas as a substitute for the soul is interesting principally because it shows how ingrained was the belief in rebirth. It was so ingrained that the Buddhists never thought of questioning it, but, in fact, based their whole system upon it—although according to them there is no soul to transmigrate! And this forced them into the shallow mystery of the khandhas.

(3) SALVATION.—Is there, however, no way in which one may finally escape from *all* existence? Since even

[5] *Ibid.*, 4.3.21.
[6] *Ibid.*, 4.3.22.

the best of it is evil, are we hopelessly chained to an eternity of misery? Is there no salvation? All sects answer yes; and, in fact, each sect makes it its prime business to point the way to it. That is the aim of religion and philosophy in India: to show how man may be released from this round of existences, consisting wholly of misery. One who has reached the goal, and freed himself from the last links of the chain binding him to existence, attains Nirvāna. This is a term common to all sects; and the concept which it covers is practically about the same in all, though philosophically there are widely different definitions. Generally speaking, it is at least a cessation of conscious individual existence. This need not mean what it does mean to strict and original Buddhism, absolute annihilation. It may mean perfect fusion of the individual personality in the World-soul, the All, the Brahman; so in the Vedānta philosophy. It may mean total and final separation of the soul from all matter and so from all material processes, which include all of what we call mentality and consciousness; so in the Sānkhya philosophy. At any rate, it is always what may for practical purposes be called non-existence. If we nevertheless find Nirvāna referred to and described, even in Buddhist texts, as a state of perfect bliss, which after all in strict logic must imply being, we must not press those passages too far. They may be merely poetic expressions of the devotee's yearning; or they may mark an occasional lapse into the every-day language of man's more primitive feelings and emotions.

The method by which one may attain Nirvāna varies to some extent in the several sects. Generally speaking, however, the basis of the method is intellectual, or perhaps rather intuitive; at least in most cases the *sine qua non* is the *knowledge* or realization of some *truth*. Ignorance (avidyā) is generally the root of existence and so of evil; we have already seen that in Buddhism, for in-

stance, it is ignorance that causes desire, which causes action, which leads to continued existence. Good deeds in themselves, certainly, can never bring release; they result in less unhappy existences, but that is all.

All systems, however, prescribe various preliminary steps and practices which they regard as being useful in preparing the soul for the reception of the enlightenment which will finally bring release. And occasionally these preliminary steps become so prominent in the minds of some sectaries that they obscure, and in some cases even obliterate, what was originally the true goal. Chief among these avenues of approach to true knowledge, which, however, occasionally lead off into seductive by-paths, are two. One is devotion to the personality of some god or prophet, who is regarded as a kind of personal savior or helper on the way to release. The other is the practice of asceticism in some form or other, regarded as helping to prepare for enlightenment by freeing the individual from attachment to the world, by gradually conquering the natural desires of the flesh.

The three standard Hindu means or aids to attaining Nirvāna are, then, first and foremost, knowledge of the religious truth; second, personal devotion to some god or saint around whom the religion centers, and who helps his devotees to gain enlightenment; third, the ascetic life in some form. Now the regular Buddhist confession of faith, repeated by all who adhere to the religion, is the thrice-repeated formula called the Three Jewels, or gems of the faith: "I go to the Buddha for refuge; I go to the Law (dhamma) for refuge; I go to the Congregation for refuge." Here are all the three items—but with the significant change that personal devotion to the Buddha, which implies acceptance of his life as an example, is put first. Only second comes the Law—that is, the religious truth proclaimed by him. And finally, there is adhesion to the order of monks which he is said

to have founded, the communion of saints; which involves a monastic mode of life.

We can hardly believe that this creed dates from the earliest times. The glorification of the person of the Buddha in particular looks secondary; it has no place in the scheme of salvation as it is represented to have been laid down by the Buddha himself. It was, by the way, carried much farther by the Mahāyāna or Northern Buddhists; they deified the Buddha outright, and offered quasi-brahmanical sacrifices to him, in imitation of the Vishnuite cults which make so much of bhakti, "devotion" to the god or saint.

Let us, however, follow the accepted statement of the creed, and look into the content of each of its terms as they present themselves to the pious believer.

(1) THE BUDDHA.—For a long time it has been customary to speak of the date of the death of Buddha, traditionally put at about 480 B.C., as the first approximately certain date in the history of India. In very recent times, however, doubts have been expressed, or rather doubts which were expressed much earlier have been revived on the basis of new evidence, as to the historicity of the Buddha. It is now doubted by some students of Buddhism, whether all the traditional details of the life of the Master are not myths, and even whether he existed at all as a historical personage.

Whether these doubts are justified or not, I cannot decide. Furthermore, I cannot feel that it is a matter of much practical importance. If the Buddha is a myth, he is a great and noble myth, and he has played the rôle of a reality in the lives of many hundreds of millions of people, who have derived from the example of his supposed life, as much as from the teachings which pass under his name, religious comfort, inspiration, and guidance.

According to Buddhist belief, then, the founder of

Buddhism was a man named Siddhārtha, of the family Gāutama. He was a member of a minor kshatriya or noble tribe called the Çākyas, who lived at Kapila-vastu, in the foothills of the Himālayas, near the modern Nepal. From the tribal name Çākya is derived one of the Buddha's most common titles, Çākyamuni, the Sage of the Çākyas. While quite a young man he determined to abandon the world, and sought refuge in an ascetic order; but he found no peace in it, and left it again. After many spiritual struggles he finally discovered that he had a new message to proclaim, a new gospel of salvation. It is at this point, properly, that the title Buddha becomes applicable to him; the word means the Enlightened One, and is, like Christ, a title referring to him as founder of the religion. Resisting the temptations of Māra, the Evil One, who tempted him to use his new knowledge for his own benefit by attaining Nirvāna at once, he set out to proclaim his message to the world. Converting first a few disciples, he founded his order of monks (afterwards of nuns also), and thereafter spent his life alternately in wandering about and in resting with his followers in various places—always preaching and teaching. He is said to have lived to be eighty years old.

(2) The Congregation (Sangha).—Departing from the accepted order of the Buddhist confession, we shall take up next the third of the "Three Jewels," the congregation, that is the order of monks and nuns. For Buddhism is essentially a monastic religion. It teaches that the life of a monk, who has severed all connection with temporal affairs, abandoned home, possessions, and family-ties, and taken up the homeless life; who subsists wholly on alms, and is forbidden to own any property, forbidden even to accept in alms anything except the bare necessities of life, and of them only barely enough at any one time for his own immediate needs,—that this life

is the one and only mode of life in which one can hope to obtain release. And this mode of life is open to all men, not limited to any select group or caste. Within the order caste-lines are abolished; all monks are brothers. Some of the Buddha's immediate disciples are said to have been persons of low-caste origin.

But Buddhism makes a great and all-important distinction between monasticism and extreme asceticism. What distinguishes the Buddhist order from the numerous other orders of Indian ascetics, and sects of unorganized holy men, as well as from many orders of Christian monks, is that the others, or at least many of them, regarded self-mortification, sometimes in very extreme forms, as the most meritorious thing. Buddhism, on the other hand, stands definitely opposed to such harsh and unnatural practices. Simplicity is rigorously insisted upon; but self-torture is as rigorously forbidden. The Middle Way, the Way of Peace, Calm, and Composure, is what Buddha preaches. Avoid all extremes, the extreme of asceticism as well as the extreme of worldliness!

Why, then, you may ask, should Buddhism advocate the monkish life at all? Why not let men live like normal human beings, enjoining them merely to uprightness and justice in their dealings with their fellow-men? Buddhism answers: because it is impossible to live in the world without taking part in it; without having, at least to some extent, worldly interests and so worldly desires. Desire is the root of existence, and existence is all evil. No one can hope to free himself completely from desire, which is the only way to salvation, except by withdrawing from the world.

It should be said that the Buddhist order of monks was not, like most Christian orders, a hard and fast group, which having once entered one could never leave. On the contrary, it was recognized as possible for a man to enter the order temporarily, with not even any inten-

tion of remaining in it permanently. The great Buddhist emperor Açoka is said thus to have entered the order several times, for periods of time; and the same was frequently done by others. The salutary effect which membership in the order brings can be acquired in a lesser degree by temporary association with it. Buddhism has this feature in common with a number of other Indian orders. Of course such temporary association cannot lead to the final goal, to the complete cessation of desires and so of existence. But, then, neither does permanent membership in the order of itself confer this benefit. Only a certain state of mind can do that. The monastic life is important as one of the necessary preliminaries leading to this state of mind; it is only a means, not an end in itself.

What the real end of the religion is, we learn when we take up the third (in the Buddhist formulation the second) of the three "Jewels" of the Buddhist faith, namely:

(3) THE LAW.—The cardinal doctrine of Buddhism is summed up in the formula of the Four Noble Truths, attributed to the Buddha himself. These are:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering, namely:

Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; disease is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair are suffering; union with the unloved is suffering; separation from the loved is suffering; any unsatisfied desire is suffering; in short, all the five attachment groups (the five elements of sentient existence, that is, collectively, all forms of sentient existence) are suffering.

In this first Noble Truth we have the Buddhistic formulation of the common Hindu pessimism with regard to the world.

2. The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering, namely:

It is desire, leading to rebirth, joining itself to pleasure and passion, and finding delight in every existence; desire, namely, for sensual pleasure, desire for future life, desire for prosperity in this life.

Here we have the common Hindu view that desire is the root of existence, because (though this is not clearly stated in the formula) it leads to action, which must bear fruit in continued existence. The third Truth is a necessary inference from the first two:

3. The Noble Truth of the Release from Suffering, namely:

It is the complete fading-out and cessation of this desire, a giving-up, a getting rid, a relinquishment, an emancipation from this desire.

Finally,

4. The Noble Truth of the Way to the Release from Suffering, namely:

It is the noble eight-fold path, to wit, right belief, right resolve, right speech, right behavior, right occupation, right effort, right contemplation, right concentration.

All of the elements of these four Noble Truths are elaborated at great length in the technical Buddhist works; especially the last, the eight-fold Noble Path leading to the Release from Suffering, which of course is the final goal—in short, Nirvāna. Its eight stages are made to include a complete program of moral and intellectual advance, leading to final perfection. Thus, right belief, the first of the eight stages, is defined as belief in the Four Noble Truths themselves. This is necessary as a starting-point. Then, right resolve is the resolve to renounce sensual pleasures, to have malice towards none, and to harm no living creature. Right speech is abstention from falsehood, slander, harsh language, and frivolity of speech. Right behavior is abstention from the taking of life, from theft, and from fornication. Right occupation is the shunning of professions and means of

livelihood which are in themselves bad and the cleaving to those that are good. Right effort is the strenuous and heroic and constant endeavor of the mind to get rid of all evil and impure qualities and to cultivate the good and pure qualities (which are carefully defined in great detail). Right contemplation is the life of one that is actively conscious of the elements of being without allowing them to affect him with joy or sorrow. Right concentration is a state, or rather a series of states, of mystic trance, culminating in the fourth and highest of the states of trance, "which has neither joy nor sorrow, but is contemplation refined by indifference." This last state is practically a foretaste of Nirvāna—although to describe it as such would not be consistent with the Buddhist theory, for Nirvāna can only come after death, with the dissolution of all "form."

This simple scheme of salvation is the central point of primitive Buddhism. As time went on it became more and more developed and elaborated and schematized in all its details. Indeed, the later Buddhist schools went much farther, and attempted to construct elaborate systems of metaphysics and psychology, to match the other Hindu systems. It seems to have been characteristic of early Buddhism that it not only failed to provide much of a metaphysical theory, but distinctly took the ground that metaphysics was useless, worse than useless, in fact, since it distracted the attention from the things that are alone worth while. In a very interesting old dialogue[7] found in the Sutta Pitaka or "Sermon Basket," a monk named Mālunkyāputta is represented as coming to the Buddha and complaining that the Buddha has not elucidated such questions as these: Is the world eternal or not? Is the world infinite (in space) or finite? Are

[7] The Lesser Mālunkyāputta Sutta, in the Majjhima Nikāya; translated by Warren, *Buddhism in Translations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1896), p. 117 ff.

the soul and the body identical or not? Does the saint continue to exist after death or not? The monk is offended by this neglect of questions which he considers important, and states frankly his feeling that he cannot continue to adhere to the Buddha's doctrine unless the Buddha explains these questions. The Buddha answers him in this wise: "Suppose a man were wounded with a poisoned arrow. His friends would urge him to have it treated by a physician or surgeon. Suppose then the wounded man should say: 'I will not have this arrow taken out until I learn to what caste the man who wounded me belonged, what his name and family were, what his size, physical appearance, and place of residence were, and the exact nature of the materials used in making the arrow, the bowstring, and the bow.' What would become of such a man? Would he not die of the poisoned wound before he found out the answers to all these questions? And what difference do all the questions really make? It is just so with the Buddha's doctrine of the religious life. The religious life does not depend on the nature of the world or on the nature of the soul. Whatever the nature of the world or of the soul may be, there still remains existence, which is suffering, and the elimination of which it is my business to teach. I have not elucidated the questions you refer to because they profit not, nor do they have anything to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor do they tend to Nirvāna. What I have elucidated is only that which does profit, which does concern the fundamentals of religion, and which does lead to Nirvāna, namely this: the truth of suffering, the origin of suffering, the release from suffering, and the way to the release from suffering."

The practical ethics of Buddhism, like its most fundamental beliefs, is essentially the same as that of all the higher forms of Hinduism. It enjoins patience, kind-

ness, long-suffering, meekness, love of all creatures, and especially the abstention from doing any wilful injury to living beings; the abandonment of all unkindness and malice, even towards one's enemies; truthfulness, justice, and in short all the virtues generally accepted by the highest ethical systems of the world, including that of Jesus. Over all is cast as it were the veil of moderation. This may almost be called the cardinal Buddhist virtue, or rather a qualification of its entire code of virtues. If Buddhism has a distinctive quality on the ethical side, it is this. Excessive zeal, even in a cause which is in itself righteous, is deprecated, as apt to defeat its own ends. This moderation, this avoidance of extremes and readiness to meet human nature half way, is probably one of the secrets of the enormous success of Buddhism as a missionary religion. To mention one example: like all higher forms of Hinduism, Buddhism preaches ahinsā or non-injury of any living being. This implies, of course, abstention from the eating of meat. And good Buddhists are therefore specifically commanded to observe a vegetarian diet. Nevertheless, if one is offered hospitality, and the meal set before one by the host consists of meat, it is not sinful to partake of it. To refuse to do so would injure and insult the host, and would do no good, since it would not restore life to the slaughtered animal. The statement is still found in some even very recent authorities that the Buddha himself died from indigestion caused by a hearty meal of roast pork, offered him by a simple peasant (a "son of a smith") at whose hut the aged saint stopped one evening. It is too bad that this statement cannot now be accepted. It illustrates in a very true and poignant way the Buddha's attitude on just this subject; we can hardly doubt that the Buddha would have eaten the meal if it had consisted of pork (even though pork is a particularly unclean meat in India, eaten only by the lowest classes). But the fact is that the story is

based on a misunderstanding of an ambiguous Pāli word. The Chinese version of the story proves that it was a meal of mushrooms, not of pork, which, according to Buddhist tradition, caused the death of the Master.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.—In recent years it has been much discussed whether early Christianity shows any signs of influence from Buddhism. The similarities between the ethical doctrines of the two religions are obvious. But it is now generally admitted that there is no particular reason to suspect any interinfluence on that ground. It simply means that the highest ethical principles of different parts of the human race tend to coincide. More significant seem to be coincidences in certain stories, legends, or narratives, found in the sacred or semi-sacred books of the two faiths. There is no doubt at all that in the second, third, and fourth centuries A.D., if not earlier, some Buddhist legends wandered to the west and became incorporated in Christian literature. The apocryphal gospels and the lives of the saints contain a number of such Hindu—and generally Buddhistic—legends. Nay, the story of the life of the Buddha himself is found, in unmistakable form, as the story of St. Josaphat; which name is itself a corruption of the Sanskrit Bodhisattva, the title of the Buddha before he became buddha ("enlightened")—that is, the "Future Buddha." In other words, the figure of St. Josaphat, who is found in the calendar of both the Greek and the Roman churches, presents the remarkable spectacle of the incorporation in Christianity, as a saint, of the founder of Christianity's greatest rival for world-supremacy—Buddhism. If there are any Greek or Roman Catholic churches dedicated to St. Josaphat, they are really dedicated to the Buddha, little as the worshipers may guess the fact.

Such borrowings as these are, however, comparatively late in the history of Christianity. With the canonical

gospels the case is much less clear. Some striking parallels have been pointed out even in them. According to the latest pronouncement by the highest authority on this subject now living in the world, Professor Garbe, of the University of Tübingen,[8] there are four narratives in the Christian gospels which are probably derived from Buddhist sources, through indirect channels of oral tradition. These are: (1) the angel chorus which announces the miraculous birth of the Saviour; (2) the temptation; (3) the miraculous walking on the water of the disciple (Peter), with his rescue by the Master when by reason of insufficient faith he began to sink; (4) the miraculous feeding of the multitude.[9]

The question whether particular stories in the Christian gospels are borrowed from similar Buddhistic stories or not is a difficult one to decide, because of the lack of definite criteria for judging. There is as yet no agreement among scholars on the subject. Such borrowing as may have taken place must have been mostly from Buddhism into Christianity, and not *vice versa,* because most of the sacred texts of Buddhism go back to pre-Christian times.[10] But at any rate, if there were such borrowings, we may be sure that they were not numerous. In the main, Buddhism and Christianity are certainly independent of each other, in their sacred stories as well as in their ethical principles.

[8] In his book *Indien und das Christentum,* Tübingen, 1914.

[9] The most complete collection of parallels between the sacred books of Buddhism and Christianity is found in the work of Albert J. Edmunds, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels,* Philadelphia, 2 vols., 1908. Edmunds, however, does not believe that most of his parallels are borrowed. To him they mostly indicate only the general similarity between the two religions. Garbe, in the above-mentioned work, acknowledges his indebtedness to the work of Edmunds.

[10] The contrary has been maintained by some in the past, and is argued very recently by J. Kennedy in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for April and July, 1917. Kennedy, whose articles have appeared since I wrote the above, thinks such borrowings as occurred in the earliest Christian times were in the other direction—from West to East. His arguments do not convince me.

ADDENDUM: A BRIEF NOTE ON JAINISM.

About the same time that Buddhism was founded, another very similar heretical sect arose, which is known as Jainism. It is said to have been founded by a somewhat older contemporary of the Buddha, named Vardhamāna; he is commonly called Mahāvīra, which means Great Hero, and is, like Buddha, only a title of respect given to the Master by his followers. Like Buddha, Vardhamāna was a kshatriya, and his religion is similar to Buddhism in its attitude towards Hindu orthodoxy. Indeed, its tenets generally are very close to those of Buddhism. It does not, however, emphasize the virtue of moderation which is so important in Buddhism. And in its canonical texts, at least in their present form, there is not the aversion to abstract philosophy that is found in early Buddhism. There is, on the contrary, a great deal of speculation, though of a very crude sort; metaphysically, Jainism ranks low among Hindu systems. I will mention only one of its most curious beliefs; it is that there are individual, separate, living souls in absolutely all parts of nature. Fire, wind, stones, wood, in short all vegetable and inanimate nature is peopled by souls, just like animal souls, and like them included in the range of transmigration, so that it is conceivable that a man might be reborn not only as a worm or a gnat (as all Hindus believe) but even as a stick or a stone. This is not a primitive animism, though it is equally crude when stated thus baldly, and has not the excuse of the naiveté and ignorance of primitive animistic tribes. But the Jainistic theory is simply a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Hindu theory of transmigration.

On the practical side, Jainism is characterized on the one hand by an extreme asceticism, and on the other by an extreme devotion to the doctrine of ahinsā or non-injury of living beings. This latter doctrine, as we have seen, is common to all higher forms of Hinduism, includ-

ing Buddhism. But perhaps no other sect has carried it as far as Jainism. The saving grace of Moderation, the Middle Way to which Buddhism is devoted, is lacking in Jainism. No Jain monk (for there is an order of monks in Jainism, too) is allowed to travel about during the rainy season, though at all other seasons he is, on the contrary, forbidden to stay in any one place for more than a very short time. The reason for this is that in the rainy season, in India, it is impossible to walk abroad at all without involuntarily crushing many of the tiny insects which swarm underfoot in the soggy earth.[11] Similarly, good Jains are supposed to use, and many of them still do use, strainers in drinking water, lest inadvertently they should swallow imperceptibly small insects in the draft. They devote themselves to building hospitals for animals, in which there are wards for insects, fleas, lice, and so on. In short, they almost make a laudable virtue into a ridiculous absurdity.

Another sign of the marked lack of moderation among the Jains is their extreme asceticism. This, of course, they have in common with many Hindu sects, some of which fully equal them in it; but, as aforesaid, they differ markedly from the Buddhists on this point. It is a meritorious act to the Jains to perform or submit to almost any kind of self-torture. Some of them regard suicide by slow starvation as the crowning merit of all, and as insuring Nirvāna. (Buddhism definitely forbids suicide in any form.) One of the two Jain sects, which claims, apparently with some show of justice, to be the more original in its doctrines and habits, requires that its monks shall go absolutely naked. This branch, called the Digambaras or "Sky-clothed," is to be sure the less numerous of the two; most present-day Jains belong

[11] To be sure, this particular manifestation of ahiṁsā is shared by many other Indian orders; and Buddhist monks are not wont to travel during the rains.

to the other sect, the Çvetāmbaras, or "White-clothed." Women are admitted to the order of the Çvetāmbaras, whereas for obvious reasons they are excluded from the Digambara order, and hence denied the possibility of leading the religious life. Apparently the only hope for a woman of the Digambara sect to attain Nirvāna is to acquire enough merit to be reborn as a man. Even among the less extreme Çvetāmbara Jains, violent asceticism is regarded as one of the most certain ways of acquiring merit.

Jainism, unlike Buddhism, has never been carried outside the bounds of India. But it has scored at least this triumph over Buddhism, that whereas the latter is now practically extinct in India proper, Jainism still flourishes there. There are between one and two million Jains in India, largely in the west and southwest. They are, in spite of their extreme tenets, on the whole, a highly respectable and prosperous class, consisting largely of merchants, and to a great extent making very ordinary and prosaic works of charity take the place of the originally much more ascetic performances required by the principles of their religion. These principles tend nowadays to show themselves for the most part only in what seem to us somewhat whimsical and fantastic occasional applications of charity, as in their insect-hospitals and the like.

The sacred texts of Jainism are written in a popular or Prakritic dialect, which has become for Jainism what Pāli is for Buddhism. In eschewing the cultivated Sanskrit the original Jains signalized their opposition to Brahmanism and their appeal to all classes of the population without regard to caste, just as the Buddhists did. In later times, however, again like the Buddhists (of the northern school), growth of respectability among the Jains brought with it to some extent conformity in the matter of language as in other respects; and in mediæval times Sanskrit was to a large extent used by Jain writers,

although, to be sure, it was more in secular than in religious works that it was used. The Jains of mediæval India concerned themselves very extensively with the literature of fables and stories; we owe to them a large number of collections of this type of literature, which average a very high degree of artistic excellence.

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# CHAPTER VII

## BRAHMANISM AND HINDUISM.

BY FRANKLIN EDGERTON

### I. BRAHMANISM

We have seen how the hieratic cult of the Veda developed into a formalistic, cut-and-dried system of ceremonies, lacking in both truly intellectual and truly devotional elements, and centered entirely in the hands of a class of priests. In so far as the ceremonies of this priestly cult concerned only the original hieratic ritual of the three sacred fires, centering in the soma-sacrifices, its doom was sealed. It was too specialized, too remote from the great mass of the people, to survive after it had been deprived of all intellectual and devotional background. The soma-offerings and the other performances of the three-fire cult fell into disuse at an early date. For many centuries now they have played no real part in the religious life of India. Nominally they are still in effect. The Vedic texts which prescribe them are still extant and are still supposedly sacred and binding. From time to time isolated enthusiasts have continued to perform some of them. In mediæval India an attempt was even made to provide them with a philosophic basis, in the form of the Mīmānsā system of philosophy. But it has had little practical effect.

Perhaps the priestly custodians of this cult saw the writing on the wall, and cast about for some means of safety from the impending doom. At any rate, with or without such intention, there was grafted on to the old stock a thriving branch from the living religion of the people, which infused a new life into the whole, and which in time virtually became the whole—as the old, strictly

sacerdotal part of the cult gradually perished. As we have seen, the popular religion of Vedic times contained (along with many less innocent features) a large number of regular ceremonies pertaining to definite points in the life of every normal man, such as birth-rites, rites performed at reaching puberty, marriage and funeral rites, and others. All Aryans were expected to perform these, as a matter of course. The hieratic cult did not deal with them, not because it opposed them at all, but because they were simply none of its business. But in later times the priests perhaps saw how much they could gain by making these popular rites their business. At any rate, whether with this conscious purpose or not, they adopted them and made them a regular part of their system, although they kept them carefully distinct from the other, strictly hieratic rites. And once undertaken, the work of adoption was carried out with the utmost thoroughness. The entire stock of priestly learning was put at the disposal of these popular ceremonies. They are described in the Grihya Sūtras or books of the "domestic" rites (as distinguished from the Çrāuta Sūtras, the books of the hieratic or "revelational" rites, çruti). These Grihya Sūtras are compilations made in the latest Vedic age. But they employ the sacred mantras or texts of the early Vedic literature in conducting these originally unhieratic, domestic rites.

The classical law-books (dharma-çāstras), which are the real authorities of institutional Brahmanism, make a list of twelve of these personal ceremonies, which they call samskāras, and which are supposed to be particularly pious and efficacious. They begin with the rite of impregnation and end with marriage. Among the more important of the intermediate ceremonies are those that pertain to birth and name-giving, and to the upanayana or "initiation." This last is supposed to be performed for every boy of the three upper castes, that is every

Aryan boy,[1] about the age of puberty. It consists in the boy's formal induction into the life of a student of the Veda, which is the first of the four āçramas or regular stages in the life of an Aryan. During the period of studentship, whose duration was indefinite, the student (called a brahmacārin) lived with his guru or teacher and acted as a sort of body-servant to him. At the end thereof he returned to his father's house, and shortly after was expected to marry and set up a home of his own. By so doing he entered the second āçrama or stage of life, that of the householder (grihastha). To beget a son was a religious duty to the ancestors of the family, that the rites to the Manes might be performed.[2]

Marriage was the last of the twelve samskāras. Entry into the two last āçramas or stages of life was not marked by any special ceremony. These last two stages were those of the forest-dwelling ascetic (vanaprastha) and the homeless wandering mendicant (parivrājaka, samnyāsin). And as a matter of fact they were probably always more or less theoretical and certainly optional. But there were certain other ceremonies, not called samskāras, which were nevertheless quite as important as any of the samskāras; especially the funeral rites, and the oblations to deceased ancestors, as well as a large number of minor and recurrent rites and observances.

These domestic observances still form the center of Brahmanism as a formal religion. The extent to which they are observed differs in different castes, and also to a large extent in different localities and families. All Brahmans in good standing observe at least the more important of the samskāras, as well as the funeral rites and the oblations to ancestors, and also some simple daily

[1] Compare page 166. Women were not allowed to study the Veda, and therefore this rite was not performed for them.

[2] In case no son was born to a man, he might adopt or purchase one; or his daughter's son, or some collateral male relative, might under certain conditions be regarded as belonging to him.

rites. Other castes are less strict in these observances. And, generally speaking, the lower a caste is, the less its members attend to them. No samskāra or other important rite can be performed without the aid of at least one Brahman as officiating priest; at some of them many Brahmans are or may be employed. Some of the lower castes are, however, regarded as too degraded to be allowed to have any such rites performed for them. No self-respecting Brahman would perform any rite for an outcaste or a man of a very low caste. The law-books themselves exclude all Çūdras from the study of the Veda, and therefore from the upanayana or "initiation," which marks the beginning of the studentship.

From these remarks it will be already apparent that the institution of caste is a matter of prime importance in Brahmanism. In fact, it has been said that to many Hindus their caste is their religion. Some of them hardly have any other. Brahmanism is a form of society, a social institution or system of institutions, quite as much as a religion. As I pointed out, the Hindus are too apt to think of the whole duty of man as consisting in the correct observance of formal rules of conduct; and for a Hindu this always means the rules in force in the caste to which he happens to belong. Even the observance of the brahmanical domestic rites is less a personal than a caste matter. One observes more or less of them, not in accordance with his personal convictions or pious desires, but in accordance with the custom of his caste or sub-caste. To violate caste custom is to run the risk of being excommunicated, that is, expelled from the caste; and this is the most terrible fate that can befall a Hindu, since it practically cuts him off from all intercourse with men, unless Europeans will associate with him. Now one may believe practically anything he pleases without losing caste standing. One may believe in any god, or disbelieve in all. But one must live cor-

rectly, eat and drink correctly, go through a certain minimum of formal ritual observances (mostly implying little or no actual belief), and, above all, marry correctly. Anyone who marries outside his own caste is instantly expelled. But one may lose his caste-purity even by quite involuntary contamination from lower castes. If the shadow of a low-caste man falls on a Brahman, the Brahman is polluted and must go through a ceremonial of expiation. Some castes are so low that their mere presence within a certain distance of those of higher caste is defiling. Naturally, a high-caste man must of necessity give a great deal of thought and care to the observance of the enormous mass of these caste regulations, some of which are by no means simple. It is not strange that some such men hardly find time to think of any other sort of religion.

We cannot now concern ourselves with the origin of caste as a social institution. It is rather with its religious aspects, as a part of the brahmanical theory, that we have to deal. That theory holds that caste differences are biological, not social. Men can no more change their caste than they can their species, in this life. A Çūdra may by virtuous deeds become a Brahman in his next existence, by the operation of "karma;" [3] so may a sheep or an ape become a man, in exactly the same way. Even the Rig-veda, in a very late stanza,[4] says that the four main castes were created from different parts of the body of the First Being; Brahmans from his head, rājanyas or kshatriyas from his arms, vāiçyas from his thighs, and çūdras from his feet. This theory remained standard throughout all the later brahmanical literature. It indicates the permanence of caste divisions, as well as the relations of the four supposedly original castes.

[3] See page 142 ff.

[4] Rig-veda, 10.90.12. This is the only clear reference to caste in the Rig-veda. In all other Vedic works it is well known.

First of all come the Brahmans, the priests. Next come the kshatriyas or rājanyas, theoretically warriors, or as we should say nobles; kings belong to this caste. Thirdly come the vāiçyas, originally all of the free Aryan population not included in the first two castes, agriculturists, merchants, and free artisans. Last come the çūdras, originally identical with the dark-skinned aborigines whom the Aryans subdued and enslaved, and so theoretically serfs. The first three castes, who alone are supposed to be of Aryan descent, are called "twice-born," because only they, and not the çūdras, can go through the ceremony of upanayana or brahmanical initiation, which is regarded as constituting a spiritual "second birth."

The Brahmans did not secure their position at the head of society without opposition. You will remember that the Buddhist texts show signs of a definite rejection of their claims on the part of the kshatriyas, the nobles. The Brahmanical books themselves throw out dark hints which suggest that even bloody conflicts may have signalized the struggle between the spiritual and the lay nobility. But probably religious rather than worldly weapons were the principal deciding factors. The steps of the process are not discernible. This much is clear, that already in the Brāhmanas,[5] that is in the chronological period immediately following that of the early Vedic hymns, the caste system was well developed, and the claims of the priestly caste had already attained the extravagance of later times. The priests are already called "gods on earth," an epithet which is given to them throughout all the later Sanskrit literature. Indeed, this startlingly bold term, and the position of the Brahman caste generally, can best be made to appear reasonable and logical in connection with the theory of the ritualistic religion of the Brāhmanas. As we have seen[6] this ritualistic religion

[5] See page 115.
[6] See page 126.

regards the sacrifice as the all in all. The sacrifice controls the gods, and usurps their functions; we sometimes hear even that it brought the gods into existence or raised them to divine rank. But the sacrifice, in turn, is absolutely in the control of the Brahmans. From this point of view, then, it is no wonder that the Brahmans can claim to be fully equal in rank to the old naturalistic gods.

It is convenient to apply the term Brahmanism to this social-religious system, the very heart of which is the hierarchy of castes, with the Brahmans at the head. Other castes obtain a place in the system by giving full recognition to the Brahmanical supremacy, and by employing the Brahmans to perform for them the domestic rites and observances which constitute practically the whole religious content of Brahmanism, outside of the strict social laws of caste *per se*.

But as we have hinted, it is not all castes that are fortunate enough to be allowed even this qualified position in Brahmanism. Instead of the four theoretically original castes, Hindu society is now split up into very numerous castes and subcastes.[7] And many of them are so low that Brahmans will not perform any rite for them. This automatically shuts them out from the fold of Brahmanism.

What remains then for these unfortunates by way of religion? Of course they may embrace a heterodox, non-Brahmanical sect, like Buddhism, or (since that is now extinct in India proper) Jainism. Since the invasion of the Turks, Mohammedanism, too, offers them a refuge; and since very modern times, Christian missionaries have worked among them. Most of the converts to Christianity, as a matter of fact, belong to these "despised and rejected" classes.

[7] Sir A. Baines, in his book on *Ethnology and Caste*, gives a tabular list of over four hundred, with a list of their numbers, based on census returns.

Nevertheless, to become a Christian or a Mohammedan, or even a Jain, means separation from caste, with all the spiritual misery which that momentous step is apt to occasion in India. It is possible to embrace a more democratic, as well as more living, form of religion than Brahmanism, with its dead formalities and lack of real devotion; and that, too, without definitely breaking with the Brahmanical system. There are religious sects in India which are open to all castes and to those of no caste; which, moreover, understand religion as a very different matter from a mere set of formal observances; and which are yet tolerated by Brahmanism. In fact, many Brahmans, perhaps even most Brahmans, belong to one or another of these sects, in sympathy at least, if not in open and formal allegiance. And yet they remain members of the Brahman caste, in good and regular standing.

### II. HINDUISM

These sects are called by the collective name of Hinduism; and nearly all of them are devoted primarily to the worship of one of the two great gods Vishnu and Çiva, or of gods identified with one of them, or of their feminine counterparts, or of goddesses identified therewith.

The name Hinduism properly applies to these sectarian religions as a group, because nearly all Hindus belong to one or another of them. By Hindus in this sense I mean all natives of India who are neither Mohammedans nor Christians, nor yet adherents of some sect (such as Jainism) which is regarded as unorthodox and so outside the pale of Hinduism in the strict sense. The tests of orthodoxy are not always simple or easily defined. As we saw in the case of Buddhism, they tend to be more formal than intellectual.[8] They are apt to include a vague homage to the Veda as a supposedly holy literature, and

[8] Cf. page 135 ff.

a practical acceptance of the caste system, with the supremacy of the Brahmans, as far as every-day life is concerned. The first requirement is the more easily complied with since few people, even among the Brahmans themselves, have much idea of what is really contained in the Veda. The second may be made of slight importance by the device of centering the religion around an ascetic or monastic order. For ascetics are regarded, even by the most orthodox of Brahmans, as more or less outside of caste, or perhaps as forming a sort of distinct caste or castes of their own. Thus the Lingayats, a large sect of Çivaite sectarians in South India, regard themselves as a separate and distinct caste. And most ascetic orders, of whatever sect, are pretty free in admitting men of any caste. This does not prevent those sectaries who keep to the lay or worldly life from being rigid adherents of caste.

The Hindu sects result from very different tendencies, more or less intermingled, and really united only by a common inclination for something in the way of religion which Brahmanism could not furnish. At least three such streams of influence seem to be discernible from the start. One comes from above, so to speak. It is the spiritual heir of the Upanishads. It is speculative and intellectual, or mystical, or both by turns. The second, on the other hand, comes from below. It is popular and emotional. It seeks a religious haven for the humble and oppressed, and for all those who stand without the pale of Brahmanism from necessity, as contrasted with the intellectual leaders, who were inclined to neglect Brahmanism from choice.

For their numerical strength, the Hindu sects are of course much more indebted to the second of these two influences than to the first; although it has frequently happened that at least the original leaders of sects have been men of high social position, and of rather reflective

than emotional types of mind. But there is still a third source of Hindu sects, somewhat related to the second, which may have been, all in all, more important than either of the other two. Many of the deities which are worshiped in modern India, though they are usually regarded as incarnations or forms of Hindu deities, are in fact originally the gods of old non-Aryan tribes, or, at any rate, gods who at first had no place in the Hindu pantheon, thinly veiled by their adopted Hindu guise. There is reason to believe that this process of adoption has very ancient precedents.

All three of these elements seem to be discernible with especial clearness in the history of the sects of Çiva. This god is identical with the Vedic Rudra, who in the Rig-veda is a malevolent, destructive deity, a god of pestilences and horrors, whose wrath is deprecated, and in whom there are few signs of the graciousness which most of the Vedic gods are capable of showing. In later times the name Çiva came to be given to him euphemistically; it is an epithet meaning "kindly," and its application to Rudra means not that he was kindly, but that his worshipers wished he would be. The god has a great many other names—a thousand are enumerated later—and many of them are found already in the later Vedic Samhitās, where Rudra in his various "forms" already has a noticeably greater importance than in the Rig-veda. In the Yajur-veda he is a god of mountains and forests, of wayfarers, travelers, and merchants, of soldiers and (therefore) of brigands and thieves; also of ascetics who dwell in forest solitudes or wander about without homes; and in general of people who are not in good society—of abandoned, desperate characters, the offscourings of the lands. Already we see him assuming the forms of the later Çiva, whose detractors called him the god of outcasts and people of no account. There is little doubt that in the figure of this wild, morose deity

there are blended some old barbarous gods of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India. It may even be that Rudra himself, the Vedic prototype of Çiva, was a barbarian god who thus early intruded into the very sanctuary of the hieratic religion. At any rate, Çiva remains, throughout all his history, most of all a stern, rather harsh god. To be sure, many of his devotees see the other side in him. To some of them he appears as kindly and loving. Even his kindness, however, is most apt to be won by stern acts of asceticism and even self-torture. He is the great favorite of ascetics; in fact, he is himself their heavenly prototype. Ashes are one of his emblems; his devotees smear their bodies with them. Other signs are the human skull and the trident, and the berries called rudrāksha ("Rudra's Eye"), which are strung together in rosaries and worn by his worshipers.

Yet Çiva the stern Destroyer, who to his devotees is of course All-in-all, is also in another aspect particularly a creator, a god of generation. As such his emblem is the phallus, the linga as it is called. These lingas or phallic images are worn to this day by many hundreds of thousands of Çivaites. This side of Çiva is one of the clearest indications of his barbaric, non-Aryan connections. For phallic worship never found a place in any form of Brahmanism; and on the other hand there are one or two obscure references in the Veda which are believed to indicate that the dark-skinned aborigines whom the Vedic Aryans conquered did devote themselves to such forms of religion. However this may be, as it appears in Çivaism to-day it is all very much softened down. The linga is scarcely more than a conventional symbol of Çiva; most people hardly ever think of its original significance. As a rule, it can hardly be said to be in any way indecent or repellent, even to a European mind. Nor are there any obscene or indecent rites connected with most sects of Çivaites.

The same cannot be said for Çiva's consort and feminine counterpart, Pārvatī. She has if possible even more names than her husband; and she is certainly quite as composite as he. But even more in her case than in his there are apt to come to the surface the two phases of character which are least sympathetic to westerners, the terrible, and the obscene. One of her stock names, Umā, is thought by some to be a Dravidian name.[9] And certainly it is with her, if with any Hindu goddess, that those ferocious goddesses are identified, who even yet exact bloody sacrifices from the imperfectly Hinduized Dravidian villagers of Southern India. All over India she is known as Devī—that is, *The* Goddess, par excellence. All over India, too, she is known as the notorious and bloodthirsty Kālī or Durgā, in whose honor the former brigand sect of the Thugs used to slaughter their victims. As the Çakti or "Energy" of her consort Çiva, she is moreover a personification of the female power of generation. In this form she is the chief deity of the sects called Çāktas or Tantrists, who regard her as superior even to Çiva, and worship her symbol—sometimes a living symbol—in ways which may perhaps best be left to the imagination. It should be said, however, that the extreme branch of this sect does not dare show its head openly. No Hindu dares to admit that he belongs to it. It is, in fact, merely a form of debauchery, whose secret adherents probably for the most part are either degenerates or arrant hypocrites. It is safe to say that few of them honestly conceive that they are conducting a form of religion. It would, however, be most unfair to describe all Çāktas thus. Their less extreme division undoubtedly includes many thoroughly sincere and not impure persons.

More sympathetic to our western minds is the cult

[9] At present, to be sure, Umā is one of the kindly, not one of the terrible, forms of Pārvatī.

of Vishnu, the other great god of Hinduism. He, too, was originally a Vedic deity, this time under the same name. He was apparently a sun-god in origin; even the later Vishnu is symbolized by the disk (originally of the sun), and rides upon the heavenly eagle, who is clearly the sun-bird. But the Vedic Vishnu is a very minor and colorless figure. It is still one of the great puzzles of Indian scholarship, how he happened to be chosen for such an exalted destiny. About all we hear of him in the Rig-veda is that he traverses the universe in three enormous strides (a figurative reference to the sun's progress across the sky), and that the last of these strides lands him in the "highest place of Vishnu," the zenith, a kind of solar paradise, where the departed souls of the blessed are sometimes thought of as enjoying bliss with him. It has been conjectured that this feature may be connected with his later position as supreme god.

But, although he increases in importance in the times of the Brāhmanas and the later Vedic texts, he seems not to have become a popular deity of the first rank until post-Vedic times. In fact, it appears that he gained this rank rather indirectly than directly. Certainly his hold on the popular consciousness seems to date from the time when he absorbed the cult of Krishna.

At least as early as the second century B.C. we have definite proof that there was in existence a popular religious cult centering about a sort of demi-god named Vāsudeva or Krishna. Most scholars hold that this cult itself was composite; that there were to start with at least two, perhaps three, Krishnas. One of them at least was apparently a deified national hero of a local tribe. This whole matter is so complicated and obscure that it is quite impossible to discuss it now. In its final form, as it appears a few centuries after Christ, Krishnaism appears as a substantially monotheistic and highly devotional adoration of Vāsudeva-Krishna, who is half

shepherd and half warrior, but always truly *man* as well as truly God. In the Athanasian character of this worship lies its great strength. In the famous Bhagavad Gītā or Song of the Blessed One, an ancient Krishnaite tract imbedded in the great Hindu epic, the Mahābhārata, we have the doctrine clearly set forth: "In order to save the righteous, to destroy the wicked, and to set religion on a firm footing, I come into being from age to age."[10] God condescends to become man Himself, for the benefit of mankind. No Christian audience needs to be told how such a gospel can conquer the hearts of men.

Now in some way or other, we cannot say exactly how or why, this Krishna or Vāsudeva became identified with Vishnu. As the later theorists put it, the Supreme God, who is Vishnu, in his great love for man, made himself man in the form of Krishna. But, as the stanza I just quoted indicates, this was not the only time when this loving deity became incarnate for a benevolent purpose. So presently we have the theory of the avatāras, literally "descents," that is earthly incarnations, of Vishnu. This is perhaps the most characteristic feature of Vishnuism. At a time much later than the identification of Krishna with Vishnu, another popular human hero, Rāma, was similarly made into an avatāra of the same god, and so his cult, too, was received into Hinduism. The ancient myth of the fish who saved Manu, the Hindu Noah, from the world flood, was utilized in the same way; the fish now becomes a recognized incarnation of Vishnu. And so other myths, old and new, became absorbed into the general cult of Vishnu by the same convenient method. To this day Vishnu is worshiped mostly in particular forms or incarnations. Each Vishnuite sect devotes itself as a rule to one special avatāra. The most popular ones are Krishna and Rāma. There are usually said to have been nine such incarnations in

[10] Bhagavad Gītā 4.8.

all. There will some day be another, the idea of which is of great interest, because it gives a Messianic tinge to Vishnuism. The tenth and final incarnation of Vishnu will be in the form of Kalkin, or Kalki, a glorious Savior, who will appear and free India from barbarian rule, and finally establish his own true religion upon earth. The barbarians referred to were probably originally the Sakas or the Huns; later the Mohammedans were understood; and now it is the English who, in the hopes of many Vishnuites of nationalistic tendencies, will be expelled by the Hindu Messiah, Kalkin.

The spirit of sectarian Hinduism is essentially monotheistic, although the forms it assumes sometimes seem to us curious. Most Hindus, at least practically all the more enlightened ones, believe that there is in reality but one God, though He is called by many names. To the Vishnuite his true or most perfect form is Vishnu—usually under the guise of Krishna or Rāma. The Vishnuite, however, neither denies the existence of Çiva nor has any hostility to him as a rule. The essential tolerance of India shows itself most strikingly here. There are exceptions; instances have occurred of even bloody conflicts between opposing sectaries; but they are rare. Çiva may be thought of as another form of God, that is of Vishnu; or he is represented as an emanation of Vishnu, and perhaps even as the first of his worshipers. Çivaites, of course, think of Vishnu in similar ways. A Hindu regards himself as belonging to one particular sect, the one into which he has been initiated by a guru or teacher, and whose mantra or sacred formula (usually kept secret) he has learned. It is the god of this sect whose name he will call upon in his hour of death, and through whom he hopes for final salvation. But during his lifetime he is apt to pay homage at many shrines of other gods. Already in the Bhagavad Gītā, Krishna declares that any worship performed with sincere

devotion will reach Him, even though not addressed to Him by name—a striking doctrine and one which must be constantly borne in mind by anyone who wishes really to understand Hinduism.

The worship of the Hindu deities is generally simple and innocent. Flowers, food, and other simple offerings are deposited in the shrines, before the images of the gods. Even the bloody Kālī is now most frequently worshiped, at least in North India, with offerings of animal figures made of dough or the like, instead of the former living victims. Wealthy devotees of course may give more expensive presents; and some noted shrines have thus become very rich. Some temples and holy places, which have acquired more than a local celebrity, are visited by pilgrims from far and wide; in some cases from all over India. Many rivers also are especially sacred, notably the Ganges, on which is located Benares, Çiva's favorite home. The shrines are tended by priests, who are sometimes men of low castes. The images or idols are theoretically supposed to be actually inhabited by the presence of the god, after a fixed ceremony of consecration has been performed, the adhivāsa or "making (the god) to dwell in (the image)." To the more intellectual classes, however, the image is a mere conventional symbol, just as the saint's image or crucifix is to intelligent Greek and Roman Catholics.

The intellectual basis of all the sects is the same, in so far as it concerns the three great postulates of all Indian systems, to which I referred in my chapter on Buddhism:[11] pessimism, transmigration (with karma), and salvation viewed as a release from the ceaseless evils of the round of existence. But when it comes to the means for obtaining this release, there are marked differences. We saw that Buddhism recognizes three such means: personal devotion to the Founder (who takes

[11] Page 140 ff.

the place of God to the Buddhists); intellectual cognition or realization of the religious truth he proclaims; and an ascetic or monastic life. It may be said that in this formula Buddhism includes all the ways to salvation known in India. But most Indian systems are not so catholic.

For instance, there are some rigidly intellectual systems, like Çankara's school of the Vedānta, or like the Sānkhya, in which the intellectual factor is the only one. "The truth shall make you free," they say; and they interpret this in the strictest sort of intellectual sense. As soon as one attains to a genuine realization of the metaphysical truth which these systems claim to teach, he is thereby saved. And no amount of asceticism avails, nor yet of devotional fervor to any being (these systems have no God). These are commonly and rightly called systems of philosophy, rather than of religion. Yet since they profess to teach a scheme of salvation it seems hardly possible to deny to them the name of religion also.

On this question the Vishnuite and Çivaite sects have a certain negative agreement among themselves, to this extent, that they do not regard this pure intellectualism, to which I have just alluded, as the highest or best way to salvation.

The general position of Vishnuism is made clear once and for all in the Bhagavad Gītā, which may fairly be called the Vishnuite Bible. In it Krishna speaks of the "way of knowledge" as one road to the highest goal; but he regards it as less desirable than the "way of works." He also refers to the argument used by Buddhism [12] and other sects in favor of monasticism or asceticism, that participation in worldly life necessitates action prompted by desire, and so leads to the fruit thereof, continued existence in rebirth. Krishna's counter-argument to this is, that one should live in the world

[12] Page 149.

performing such acts as are required by Duty (a sort of categorical imperative) *without desire for or interest in the results* of the action. Actions so performed, he says, do not lead to continued existence; they have no binding effect, such as other actions, performed for interested motives, have. Above all, however, the Gītā exalts bhakti, "devotion" to God, that is to Krishna-Vāsudeva. The God of Vishnuism is neither an abstract principle nor a remote and purely heavenly being. He is not only philosophically immanent in the entire universe; more than that, he is a personal, tender-hearted lover of mankind. He made himself man to save the world. And he is the direct and personal Savior of those who trust in him. He brings his devotees immediately to salvation. Accordingly, the chief refuge and hope of man should be warm, fervent, even ecstatic love for Him. This is what is meant by bhakti, which has been the main reliance of the Vishnuite sects in all ages. No wonder that it has suggested Christianity to many scholars. But it is now generally recognized that the concept of bhakti in India antedates the Christian era, so that it cannot have been derived from early Christian missionaries, as was once held by some.

The idea of bhakti has played an important rôle in the later Çivaite sects, too. But on the whole the Çivaites have been rather more inclined to the practice of asceticism as a means to salvation. This is indeed more in keeping with the originally sterner and gloomier aspect of their god.

### III. SYNCRETIZING TENDENCIES

If we restrict the term Brahmanism, as it seems to me best to do, to a system of ritual practices and social observances, then we may fairly say that Brahmanism has never fully satisfied the religious needs of any very considerable proportion of the Indian people. Brahman-

ism has survived, in fact, only by a constant course of compromise. Its strength has lain in its willingness to wink at and tolerate what it could not destroy. It has always been ready to yield the substance, if only it might keep the form. It has had to stoop to conquer.

I have illustrated, rather than sketched, the history of sectarian influences threatening Brahmanism from below, from more popular cults. Quite as important have been the influences from above, from the intellectual and spiritual leaders of India, often members of the Brahman caste itself. Since the days of the Upanishads, if not before, these leaders have been inclined to treat rather contemptuously the sterile cult of Brahmanism. There is certainly no place for a ritual of sacrifice in the mystical contemplation of the One Reality which constitutes the religion or philosophy of the Upanishads in their best moments. But Brahmanism is not perturbed. It promptly declares that the impersonal, neuter Brahman of the Upanishads, the unqualified, unknowable Absolute, is nothing but a personal, masculine god Brahma, whom the Brahmans have long since known under the name of Prajāpati, the principal god of the later Vedic pantheon, and under other similar names, all of which have in fact long since been philosophized as names for the Brahman.

A little later came Buddhism and Jainism, which were openly heretical and refused to be compromised with. This attitude on their part nearly proved fatal to Brahmanism. But the cult of Krishna arose in the nick of time. Wholly non-Brahmanical, perhaps even anti-Brahmanical, in origin; a monotheistic, fervently devotional worship of a god who originally had no Brahmanical connections; Krishnaism nevertheless allowed itself to be reconciled to Brahmanism by the identification of Krishna with the ancient Vedic god Vishnu, who already had pretentions to rank as a name for the absolute Brahman. And thereafter the cult of Krishna-Vishnu proved a most

effective weapon against Buddhism. Krishna, too, whether by this means or (more likely) even before his fusion with Vishnu, was philosophized as a personal manifestation of the metaphysical Absolute. The same treatment was accorded to Çiva, who as the heir of the Vedic Rudra already had a position in the Brahmanical pantheon.

The last step in this triple fusion of popular Hinduism, Brahmanism, and the higher philosophy, was the construction of the so-called Trimūrti, the "Three-form," or the Hindu Trinity. This theory regards the three names, Brahma, Vishnu, and Çiva, as three forms of the One God, three aspects of the personalized Absolute, who is Brahma as Creator, Vishnu as Preserver, and Civa as Destroyer. Commonplace as this doctrine is in all the literature, it has never gained much foothold in popular belief. In spite of it, the great mass of Hindus are still either Vishnuites, who regard Brahma as born from a lotus on Vishnu's navel and Çiva as equally subordinate to Vishnu, or else Çivaites, who likewise make Çiva supreme over the other two. Brahma has no sect, and almost no independent worship.

In spite of all this reconciliation, the forms of worship of Brahmanism and Hinduism are kept absolutely distinct, even among those who more or less engage in both. The classical Brahmanical lawbooks forbid Brahmans to act as priests in Hindu temples. This prescription is now only partly enforced; but at least in parts of India, such Brahmans as disregard it are despised by their brother-Brahmans. And a very large number of Brahmans affect a sort of mild and tolerant contempt for the sectarian worship, even though they may to some extent take part in it.

The early identification of both Vishnu and Çiva with the philosophical Absolute, the Brahman, is by no means the end of the story of the relations between the higher

thought of India and the sectarian cults. Especially the later Vedānta philosophy is intimately associated with various sects of Vishnuism, and also, in a less degree, with Çivaite sects. As taught by the great Cankara, the Vedānta is a pure idealistic pantheism, or better, idealistic monism, with no place for a personal God at all, except as a part of what it calls Māyā, the World-Illusion, to which all individual personality is assigned. But the Vishnuite teacher and sect-founder Rāmānuja had a different interpretation of the Vedānta, and of the Upanishads on which it claims to rest. He taught what is called a "qualified monism," in which God is real, and even individual souls have a partial reality as "parts" of Him. Out of this school have sprung indirectly most of the modern sects of Vishnuism. Some of them even go so far as openly to renounce the monistic position and declare themselves dualists, believing in the independent reality of God, the world, and the individual soul. Some of these sects, even, still profess to follow the Vedānta system. Their doctrines, in point of fact, come much closer to those of the ancient Sānkhya system, or rather of its offshoot, the Yoga.

I have felt compelled to slight some important phases of my subject, and even to omit altogether some, which may perhaps be considered as important as certain of the phases to which I have referred.[13] But the subject of modern Indian religions is so large and so desperately complicated that it is hard enough to unravel its historic aspects even with unlimited time. Those who are at all

[13] I might allude here by way of example to one of these neglected phases, viz., the cult of Rādhā, favorite of Krishna, who is quite extensively worshiped either alone or with her lover. The love of Krishna for her is sometimes allegorized as the passionate longing of the human soul seeking God. The famous Gītā Govinda of Jayadeva is an exquisite lyric poem describing in passionately sensuous and highly erotic terms the romance of Krishna and Rādhā. It has been beautifully rendered into English by Sir Edwin Arnold.

familiar with the field will, I am sure, be lenient in their judgment of me.

As for those to whom the subject is new, I will ask them in conclusion to carry away with them this final thought:

Hinduism is a gigantic Proteus, the very essence of which is its innumerable forms. Yet there is somehow an underlying sense of unity in these forms—"if dimly, yet indeed revealed." To state in words a generalization of Hinduism may be bold. Some may doubt whether there is any such thing. Yet I will venture on the following as an expression of what seems after all to come out of Hinduism—sometimes plainly stated, perhaps more often vaguely felt:

You may call God by whatever name you will; but in truth God *is* One.

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# CHAPTER VIII

## ZOROASTRIANISM.

BY ROLAND G. KENT

THE modern traveler, coming from the lands of western civilization and setting foot for the first time in India, the land of many religions, finds himself in a maze of brilliant color, far surpassing that which he may have seen in the Nearer East. Through this kaleidoscopic panorama move the dignified white-robed figures of the Parsis, the so-called "Fire-worshipers." Should the Occidental traveler make inquiries concerning them, he would find that they are held in the highest esteem for their generosity toward all philanthropic movements; they are famed for their liberality toward relief funds of all kinds, for their assistance to hospitals, for their patronage of education, even of education for the female sex—a cause which can hardly be expected to have progressed very rapidly in the Orient. By occupation they are mostly merchants, though they are well known also as shipbuilders; in the latter capacity they provide the means for their carrying on of commerce. In number they are about one hundred thousand; but this is only one-thirtieth of one per cent. of the teeming millions forming the population of British India and Burma, and the prominence of this tiny fraction of Parsis is a testimony to their industry and capabilities, justifying us in giving to them, the followers of Zoroaster, a place in the list of the great religions that is denied to other faiths whose followers are many times as numerous; for example, the Sikhs and the Jains, of India, and the Mormons, of the Western United States.

There are three conspicuous features of Parsi re-

ligion, as it impresses the superficial observer to-day: fire-worship, a thorough-going duality of good and bad, and the disposal of the dead. But the Parsi himself indignantly denies that he worships the fire: the Sacred Fire is only the symbol of the supreme god, Ahura Mazdah (Ormuzd), and is not worshiped nor revered except in that capacity—somewhat as the Cross of Christianity is not in itself the object of worship. Yet both among Parsis and among Christians there is the danger that the symbol may be taken for the reality; and with the less educated or less thoughtful of the Parsis there can be no doubt that there is in truth a worship of the Fire, rather than of the Supreme God represented by it. The places of worship of the Parsis are known as Fire-Temples, since it is there that the Sacred Fire is kept and the ritual is performed; but there is no congregational worship, and the ritual is performed privately in the temple by the priests. These priests must be sons of priests, though sons of priests may choose other callings; and as the livelihood of the priest is a scanty one, compared with that of the Parsi in the business world, the more able and energetic of the sons of priests are likely to follow secular callings, so that the priests are rather drawn from the indolent and incompetent. They must memorize the sacred writings, known as the Avesta, for purposes of recitation in the ritual; and since this is in a tongue now long extinct as a spoken language, and decipherable by scholars only with difficulty and doubt, the priests are many of them in entire ignorance of the meaning of those passages which they recite, though of recent years there has been a movement for the better instruction of candidates for the priesthood. In these temples, the Sacred Fire is maintained by the priests and never allowed to go out; it is fed with holy fuel, including sandalwood, which burns with a fragrance. The most notable ceremony is that connected with the

preparation and drinking of the *Haoma*-juice (*hom*-juice), which is in origin and in etymology the same as the Soma of the Veda.

The duality of the theology of the Parsis may be explained briefly: the entire universe is composed of good and bad creations; whenever the Good Spirit created any thing or creature, the Evil Spirit, Angra Manyu (Ahriman) created its evil counterpart. The development of the world is then a battle between the good and the bad, which is to eventuate in the final victory of the good and the subjection of the Evil Spirit. Here, again, the modern Parsi objects to this interpretation of his faith, saying that the Evil Spirit is not coördinate with the Good Spirit, but is distinctly inferior at all times. That, however, the modern believer is attempting to bring a strict monotheism into a religion which was by its founder endowed with this very dualism, will appear later, when we consider the testimony of that founder, Zoroaster, from his own words.

To the Parsi, earth, fire, and water are all possessed of holiness which must not suffer pollution; therefore dead bodies may not be buried, nor burned, nor allowed to rest in the waters where the living person may have met with death, accidental or otherwise. For the disposal of the dead, without rendering unclean these elements (holy because they are creations of the Good Spirit), they have constructed the so-called Towers of Silence, great round structures open to the sky, with a metal grating at some distance from the earth. Into these they carry the dead body, and place it on the gratings; within a few minutes the vultures swoop down and strip the flesh from the corpse, while the bones fall through the grating and an ingenious arrangement prevents the ritual contamination of the earth beneath. Horrible as this seems to us, it is a matter of pride to the Parsi that it is sanitary, for he claims—and I have no

facts with which to contest his claim—that no contagious disease has ever spread among the Parsis, nor has this disposal of the dead ever spread contagion to others, though India is ever the home of plague and epidemic. But, if we may again anticipate, Zoroaster himself did not contemplate this mode of disposal of the dead, but burial, the holy Earth lending indestructibility until the Day of the Last Judgment.

But let us turn now and take a survey of the traditional history of this religion, as recounted by its own followers, from its inception to the present day, before we attempt to glean from the oldest portions of the Avesta, the Parsi Bible, the doctrines and practices which Zoroaster himself sought to propagate.

### Sketch of the History of the Religion

At a very early date, somewhere in Persia, and probably in the northwest, Zoroaster was born; the tradition sets this as late as 660 B.C. His birth was heralded by marvelous happenings, and for some years the powers of Evil sought to destroy him, but his life was on every occasion miraculously preserved. Seeing that the child was marked for a great future, his father placed him under the care of a wise teacher. To the Persian, fifteen is the ideal age for attaining to manhood; at this age Zoroaster retired from the world for solitary meditation and preparation for his great calling. When he was thirty years of age, he received the revelation, and within a short time had his seven visions, the first a conference with Ahuramazda himself, the succeeding ones with the six archangels successively: *Vohu Manah* or Good Thought, *Asha Vahishta* or Best Righteousness, *Khshathra Varya* or Desirable Sovereignty, *Spenta Armati* or Holy Devotion, *Harvatāt* or Welfare, and *Amrtāt* or Immortality. In obedience to the instructions received in these visions and by virtue of the powers which he

had therein received, Zoroaster set out to preach the true religion. But it was a slow and discouraging mission; at the end of ten years he won his first convert, his own cousin. Two years later he secured a hearing before the Kavi or Lord Vishtaspa, King of Balkh in northeastern Persia, where he contests with the wise men of the court and comes off victor; but a conspiracy lands him in prison, from which he escapes only by the offer to restore from a mysterious illness the favorite black horse of the king. This done, Vishtaspa is converted, and with him his family and his court. The critical moment of the Zoroastrian faith had been successfully passed.

With the support of the royal circle at Balkh, the faith entered into the missionary stage. There are echoes of conversions among the Turanians of the north, among the Hindus and among the Greeks; we even hear that the sacred writings of Zoroaster were translated into a Greek version. Whether the Prophet himself went on these missions we may doubt; his time he may rather have spent in organizing the religion and in establishing the ritual at home, where he was Chief Priest in charge of the Sacred Fire. But the propagation of the faith led to enmities, and war came on with Arjath-aspa, King of the Hyaonians, a Turanian people. The first war ends in the rout of the Turanians, but in the second war, before the final victory of the true believers, Balkh was taken, and the aged Zoroaster slain as he stood by the Sacred Fire in ministration. Zoroaster was seventy-seven years of age at his death, which the traditional chronology makes 583 B.C.

The death of the Prophet did not interfere with the onward career of the faith which he had proclaimed; a series of high-priests followed him, down to the time of the invasion of the Macedonian Alexander. The sacred writings of Zoroaster, known as the Avesta, were of great extent, and were reputed to have contained over two

million verses; they were written in golden letters on twelve thousand cowhides, tied together with golden bands. This precious archetype of the Avesta was destroyed by Alexander when he burned the palace at Persepolis; and it was only fragments and portions preserved by the memories of the priests, which escaped and were later gathered together. The Zoroastrian faith persisted through the time of the semi-Greek dynasties, and seems to have been again the state religion under the Parthian kingdom, one of whose rulers appears to have attempted to gather together the more or less scattered holy writings; this was in the first century A.D. But the coming in of the Sassanian kings brought about a new golden age for the faith; the first ruler of this line, Ardashīr Bābagān (226–240) directed his chief priest to collect the scattered portions of the Avesta and to compile a new Avesta, as nearly like the original as was possible. Shāpūr II (309–380) had it brought into complete order, and gave it the definitive form which it now has. The overthrow of the Sassanians and the subjection of Persia in 652 by the Mohammedan invaders ended this period of prosperity, and the Zoroastrian was forced to accept the beliefs of his conqueror or to be treated as an outlaw. Some few have indeed survived centuries of oppression and persecution in their native land, though even to-day they dread to have their neighbors know their religious faith. They number perhaps ten thousand.

But to-day the greater portion of the Zoroastrians make their home in India. A certain number of those who shunned forced conversion to Islam, made their way presently to the island of Ormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, where they remained for fifteen years; then they resolved to go on farther, to India, and voyaged to the island of Diu, where they remained for nineteen years, during which they learned to speak Gujerati, the language of the country. They then set sail again,

for reasons not definitely known. On the voyage they were caught by a terrific storm, and they seemed destined to perish; but in response to a devout prayer, the text of which has come down to us, the storm abated, and they arrived in safety at Sanjan, on the coast of Gujerat. The newcomers sent a venerable priest to the chief of the district, to ask permission to land and make a settlement, but though he detailed the sufferings and hardships which had driven them thither, the local chief, observing the hardy appearance of the refugees, feared for his throne, and asked the priest to make a statement of the tenets of their faith. This he did, cleverly selecting those features which harmonized most closely with Hindu practices; and the desired permission was then given, on condition that they should adopt the language of the country, giving up their own; should wear no armor; should dress their women in the Hindu fashion, and should perform marriage ceremonies at night. The conditions were accepted. The Parsis, as they were now called, a word which means nothing more nor less than Persians, prospered in their new surroundings for several centuries, until the approach of Mohammedan forces soon after 1300 released them from their promise not to wear armor, for they enrolled themselves under the chief of Sanjan and won a great victory for him, though this was avenged speedily by the Mohammedans, and the Parsis became refugees in the mountains. From that time there were various persecutions of the Parsis, wherever they settled, mostly at the hands of the Mohammedans, but sometimes from the Hindu rulers.

A new period of prosperity bloomed for them in Bombay, to which some Parsi merchants emigrated from Surat in the seventeenth century, probably not long before the Portuguese ceded that region to the English, in 1668. Since that time, Bombay has been the chief Parsi center; here they have flourished, have built their temples and

their tower of silence, have spread out as merchants through the East, and have been prominent in works of charity, public spirit, and education. They have not forgotten their coreligionists in Persia, whose condition they have notably ameliorated. In essentials they have remained faithful to the principles of their religion, though changed circumstances must always bring changes in practice.

### The Zoroastrian Literature

The sacred books of the Parsis are known as the Avesta, or, more commonly but wrongly, as the Zend-avesta. In its present form it is composed of five parts: the *Yasna* contains the *Gathas* or metrical hymns of Zoroaster himself, of varying content, giving the main tenets of the religion in the form in which it was promulgated by its founder; the remainder is composed mainly of various invocations used in the ritual. The *Vispered* contains additional material used in the liturgy. The third portion, the *Vendidad,* is the priestly code, with detailed injunction as to what the faithful should do and should avoid doing, and the penalties for transgression; it gives also an interesting account of the creation, the golden age, and the first destructive winter. The *Vendidad* also is used in the liturgy, and like the *Yasna* and the *Vispered* belongs to the priests only. The *Yashts* are songs of praise, with invocations of separate angels of the religion, and the best of them may be considered to represent the old religious poetry of the Iranians. The *Khordah Avesta* or Little Avesta is a collection of shorter prayers and the like, destined for the use of laity as well as of the clergy.

But these five books are only a tiny portion of the original Avesta, which, we are told, contained two million verses. The destruction by Alexander, if historical, of the great official copy, and the eclipse of the religion until the Sassanian revival, some half-dozen centuries

later, are responsible for the loss of the greatest portion of the original text. Even much of the canon which was compiled by the Sassanians, was lost in the Mohammedan persecutions; yet what to-day survives makes in translation a volume of about five hundred large pages.

The Persian language spoken in Sassanian times is known as Pahlavi, and is quite different from the earlier language. Consequently, a translation of the Avesta was made into Pahlavi, since the orginal speech was quite unintelligible except to those priests to whom the traditional meaning had been handed down by word of mouth, and this translation into Pahlavi was known as the Zand or Zend. From this came the common but erroneous term Zendavesta—an inversion of Avesta and Zend, the Avesta and Pahlavi translation. There was written also a Pahlavi Commentary, known as the Pazand; and there was a whole series of other writings in Pahlavi, on topics relating to the religion.

The study of the Avesta in the Occidental world begins soon after the middle of the eighteenth century. A few texts of portions had been brought to Europe, but they were utterly unintelligible, as even the alphabet was unknown. Some tracings made from a manuscript at Oxford were sent to Paris as a specimen, and there, in 1754, were seen by a young Frenchman named Anquetil du Perron. They fired him with an unquenchable desire to solve their mysteries, and in an effort to reach the Orient he enlisted as a soldier in troops going to India; but his object becoming known, the French government presented him with his discharge and a free passage to India. There, at Surat, he succeeded in overcoming the distrust of the Parsi priests, and after he had learned Persian, he was instructed in the Avesta and in their ceremonies, and was presented with some of their manuscripts. After seven years in India, Anquetil returned to France, and in 1771, after ten years more of

study, he issued in three volumes the first edition of the Avesta, with translation and commentary.

But pioneer work in any field leads to errors. The traditional knowledge of the priests was sadly corrupted by the lapse of time, and the zealous Frenchman was greatly handicapped by having to learn one strange language, Avestan, through the medium of another strange language, Persian, which he understood but imperfectly. Anquetil, also, was not a trained scholar. The Avesta, further, has a great amount of tiresome and futile repetitions. As a result, the subject matter presented by this first edition was in part so obscure, in part so lacking in high philosophical and religious ideas, that English and German scholars mostly attacked it as a forgery, if not of Anquetil's own making, then foisted upon him by the Parsi priests. But the authenticity of the work was accepted in France from the very first, and in 1825, when Sanskrit studies had progressed, Sanskritists began to examine the Avesta, and they observed that there was a close kinship of the two languages. With this began the real interpretation of the Avesta. Since then, a fairly numerous company of scholars, one of the most eminent of whom, I am happy to say, is an American, Professor A. V. W. Jackson of Columbia University, have devoted themselves to the study of the Avesta; and while there is of course much divergence in detail, the variations are not often of fundamental importance for our conclusions. We must remember that the traditional teachings of the Parsi priests must not be taken at their face value, though they must always receive due consideration; the tradition has suffered much in the centuries of persecution. But we have the help of the Pahlavi translation and commentary which have been mentioned (though these are often more difficult to interpret than the Avesta itself); there are translations of the Avesta into modern Persian and into Sanskrit—both of

course depending upon the more or less faulty understanding of the Avesta by the priests at the time of the making of the translations. The great aid to interpretation is that which is brought by comparative philology, with its scientific methods of etymologizing, and this is the corrective to the errors in the tradition. What may be said as to the original doctrines of the Zoroastrian faith in the remaining portion of this lecture should be understood as based on the study of the Avesta in the light of these various means of interpretation, by which scholars may arrive at reasonably accurate conclusions.

I have earlier stated that certain practices of the Parsis of to-day, such as the manner of disposal of the dead, cannot be traced back to Zoroaster himself. For the actual teachings of the prophet, we should restrict ourselves to those portions of the Avesta which may be regarded as his very words, the chapters of the Yasna which are known as the Gathas, and are distinguished from the other writings by style, language, and form. What, therefore, is next to be said, concerning the original nature of Zoroastrianism, will be limited to what we can find in the Gathas.

## The Theology.

The religion of Zoroaster has a supreme God, later known as Ahuramazda, or Ormuzd. But while both *Ahura* and *Mazdah* are used in the Gathas as names of the God, neither name is definitely and exclusively applied in this way. The word *Ahura* is still at times a common noun meaning *Lord*, referring sometimes to an earthly prince, though usually to the God; *Mazdah,* which means either *Wisdom* or *The Wise One,* is in one passage coupled with another noun, so that the God is addressed as "Mazdah and King," showing that the name is not yet specialized as a peculiar personal name of the Deity. Still less is the combination Ahuramazda a fixed ex-

pression in the Gathas. In three-fourths of the stanzas where both *Ahura* and *Mazdah* occur, the two words are separated by intervening words; when they occur together the order is always *Mazdah Ahura,* never *Ahura-mazda* as in the later writings of the religion, unless a metrical pause intervenes. Both portions of the combination receive separate case endings, and the group is a phrase, not a compound. Further, the plural of *Mazdah Ahura* is used apparently to denote the Deity and the chief archangels, of whom something will be said later. And the name *Mazdah* alone is used very frequently, while *Ahura* alone is used occasionally to denote the Deity. From this lack of specialization in the name, we may conclude that the employment of these names in this meaning originated with the Prophet Zoroaster himself. *Ahura* is, of course, an old word, used in application to a deity of more than human power; but there is no such meaning for *Mazdah* until it was applied to the God by the Prophet. In the use of this word, we see the work of Zoroaster himself.

Mazdah, to give him the original name, was the creator of the Universe: of the sun, the moon and the stars, the earth, the sky, the waters, the plants, the winds and the clouds; of man; of the cattle; of morning, noon and night; of light and darkness; sleeping and waking; of wisdom; of the obedience of son to father, and of all things. He is primeval and eternal, ever one and the same, all powerful and all-knowing: he sees afar, and cannot be deceived. He knows the past and the future; he is just, assigning rewards and punishment to men after death in accord with their deserts; but he is merciful to the good and stern to the evil. In his mercy, he made Zoroaster his prophet and sent him to teach men how they might attain to the good reward in the next world.

But Mazdah, though omnipotent, has an enemy, whom he is apparently unable to overcome without the help of

righteous men. For in the beginning of all things, Zoroaster tells us (*Yasna* 30:3-4), there were two primal Spirits, the Good and the Bad, good and bad respectively in thought and word and deed. They were twins; and the holier of the twain said to the other, his destined enemy, "Neither the thoughts nor the teachings nor the wisdoms nor the beliefs nor the words nor the deeds nor the selves nor the souls of us two agree." So began the conflict of good and evil: the Good Spirit created Life, and the Evil Spirit countered by creating Non-Life. Thus all the world is made up of two opposing forces and creations, the good created by the Good Spirit and the evil created by the Evil Spirit.

It seems almost inevitable to identify the Good Spirit of this story with Mazdah himself, and to conclude that there is a duality in the Zoroastrian religion, under which the Evil Spirit hampers the supremacy of Mazdah. Such is the impression given to the unphilosophic mind, at least. It is true that the Evil Spirit is to be overcome at the Last Judgment, but in the meantime he is an independent power, at times reducing the prophet quite to despair by the activity and successes of his followers. There is in this situation the difficult problem how the presence of victorious evil—though the victory may be only for the present—is reconcilable with belief in an all-powerful God of mercy and goodness; and Zoroaster's solution is perhaps a presentation of the problem rather than a solution. The most successful interpretation that has been suggested to remove the difficulty is that which makes Mazdah the Deity in his universal aspect, creator of everything; as soon as the good is created, that implies the creation of its evil counterpart; the Good Spirit is therefore the aspect of Mazdah in which he created what is good, and the Evil Spirit follows as a corollary to complete the picture, being an aspect of Mazdah necessarily implied by his creation of the good. Yet the making

of the Evil Spirit a part of the great and beneficent Deity is hardly one that appeals to our minds, and while the logic may be valid, such a doctrine repels rather than attracts.

The Evil Spirit is known in the Gathas as the *Druj,* the Lie or (perhaps better) Deceit. He is always the enemy of the good, seeking to destroy it and its followers; his decisions, his thoughts, words and deeds are evil, and his home is in the place of punishment, as that of Mazdah is in Paradise. All these qualities will appear more clearly when we come to the character of the followers of the Evil Spirit.

Now about Mazdah, in later times, there were ranged certain archangels known as *Amshaspands* (*amesha spentas*) or Immortal Holy Ones. All of these appear in the Gathas, but they are not all distinctly persons in those texts. So far as they are personified, they are personifications of the attributes of Mazdah himself; but they constantly appear also as attributes of the follower of Mazdah. Let us take them up one by one.

*Asha* is the personification of right-doing; at times the word is distinctly not a person, but means merely the good deeds or the righteousness of the man in question. At other times, Asha is so personified as to be celebrated with prayer and with offering, invoked, praised and worshiped. It is through Asha that Mazdah makes his revelation to Zoroaster, and instructs him in the principles of the religion which he is to proclaim on earth; Asha is the creation, even the child, of Mazdah; Asha is of one will with Mazdah; Asha gives help to man against the Evil Spirit and his followers, helps the righteous to attain to blessings, both temporal and spiritual; Asha is Mazdah's chief assistant at the Last Judgment. By an easy transfer, Asha at times is used as a synonym of Paradise; once at least, the name has the meaning of its etymological equivalent in Sanskrit, *rita,* namely, cosmic order.

*Vohu Manah* or Good Thought, is the personification of right thinking. At times the term means merely the good thought of the believers; sometimes it denotes the good thinkers or believers, as a body; at other times, Good Thought, or the abode, the dominion, or the blessings of Good Thought, and is a mere equivalent for Paradise. As a person, however, Good Thought runs through almost the same range of function as Asha, with a somewhat less active participation in them. Mazdah, Asha, and Good Thought are a triad so constantly mentioned within the limits of a single stanza, that they form almost a Trinity.

The other Amshaspands are much less frequently mentioned. Devotion, or *Armati,* is the daughter of Mazdah, pleads with the wavering spirit, blesses man in this life and in the next; but again there is little in these functions to differentiate this archangel from the preceding two. The name is applied now to the Devotion of the individual, now to the personification of that quality; and in one passage Silent Thinking (*tushnamati*) seems to be used as a synonym.

The next three are much less definitely personified. Sovereignty or Dominion (*Khshathra*) means in most instances rulership on earth, either good or bad; but it denotes also the sway of the religion of Mazdah, and Paradise. Its activity is of a most vague nature. The fifth and sixth of the list are Welfare (*Harvatat*) and Immortality (*Amrtat*), and are in the Gathas hardly personified at all, except in one passage, where they are supplicated to confer themselves as blessings.

To these six, which are in fact somewhat singled out in the Gathas (though the last two much less distinctly so), there was added, when the later list of seven Amshaspands was made up, the figure of Obedience (*Sraosha*), which appears in these early texts as a partly personified representation of the act of obeying Mazdah, and in one

passage as an Angel of Judgment. The germs of the later doctrines that Asha was in special charge of the Fire (sacred and profane alike), Good Thought in charge of cattle and other useful animals, and Armati of the earth, may be found in the Gathas, but they have no prominence; the provinces of the other Amshaspands, metals as belonging to Sovereignty, water to Welfare, and plants to Immortality, are not hinted at in the Gathas.

That the personifications are still but half-complete is seen in many stanzas, as in the following, where Good Thought is but the thinking of the righteous, and Piety is coördinated with worship and zeal, while Sovereignty is but an attribute of Mazdah (*Yasna* 49: 10): "And this, O Mazdah, I will bring to thy house for shelter: the Good Thought and the souls of the righteous, their worship, their Piety and their zeal, O thou of mighty Sovereignty, that thou mayest watch over them with abiding power."

But again study shows that there is not in the Gathas a closed band of seven Amshaspands, to which no others might be added; for the following stanza (*Yasna* 45: 10) not only names all of them except Obedience, some rather thinly personified, but uses the terms Strength (*tevīshī*) and Permanence (*utayūtī*) in a manner quite parallel to Welfare and Immortality:

"For us thou (= the believer in the true religion) shalt exalt with prayers of Devotion him who is enduringly famed as Mazdah Ahura; for through his Righteousness (Asha) and Good Thought he has taught that in his Sovereignty Welfare and Immortality shall be ours, and in his house Strength and Permanence shall be ours."

We may observe that here, also, only Asha and Good Thought, besides Mazdah, are persons, and that a different translation is possible, by which even they are but abstracts: "For he has for himself taught that for Right-doing and for Good Thinking, Welfare and Immortality

shall be ours in his Sovereignty (= paradise) . . ." More than that, the word which is rendered "enduringly" is only an oblique case form of a word (*anman*) which in another passage is coupled with Permanence in precisely the manner in which we here have "Strength and Permanence." Similarly, oblique cases of the words for Permanence and Immortality are used as adverbs, once in close combination; and in another pasasge, Immortality (as an abstract) and Happy Life (*hujyātī*) are combined in the same way as the usual "Welfare and Immortality." Other concepts which might have been promoted to the dignity of archangels, but were not, are to be found in *Atar,* the Fire on the altar, and *Ashi,* the Lot assigned after death as reward for the deserts of life: these last two did, however, become in later times angels of a grade inferior to the Amshaspands.

Now over against Mazdah and the seven Amshaspands we find in the later writings of the Avesta a set of seven arch-demons attending the Evil Spirit; but only two or three of these appear in the Gathas, and they are not strongly personified. Evil Thought (*Aka Manah*) is the special opponent of Good Thought, and represents the ideas which may be deduced from the name. Violence (*aeshma*) denotes the violence which the nomadic raiders from the north exercised upon the herdsmen of Persia, and in especial the cruelty towards the herds of cattle, which they slaughtered or drove off as booty; Violence is the particular opponent of Obedience. Heresy (*tarō-mati*) is named once, and is at a later time spoken of as the opponent of Devotion, though Devotion's special enemy is regularly *Nāonghathya* (etymologically identical with Sanskrit *Nāsatya*); but the two are perhaps to be identified. Other ideas in the Gathas which might have been advanced to the position of arch-demons are Arrogance (*parimati*), which later became a minor demon, and Disobedience (*asrushti*), which is given in a list with

the Druj, Evil Thought, and Heresy, but receives no additional prominence in later times.

To turn now from the supernatural hosts, Man was created by Mazdah as an independent agent, endowed with free will, and with the power and also the obligation of making a choice between the two spirits, the good and the evil. He should hear gladly the preaching of Zoroaster in his effort to lead him to the right way, and on having made the right choice is designated as wise, possessed of understanding and of insight, worthy, faithful. He will practice good thoughts, good words, and good deeds; he will please Mazdah by dutiful actions, will uphold Righteousness, cherish Devotion, cling to the hope of everlasting blessedness in paradise. He will offer worship to Mazdah with prayers of praise and of entreaty, and with sacrifice. He will avoid committing the sins which the followers of the *Druj* or Evil Spirit practice; he will even shun all fellowship with them, and work ill to them, smiting them with the weapon and overcoming them, never seeking to propitiate them because of some temporary exigency, for the triumph of the righteous man is assured even on earth, in this life, in addition to the reward of blessedness after death. In only one relation may he have dealings with the followers of the *Druj,* and that is in an effort to convert them to the true faith; in such missionary work he should be zealous, and then he should be resolute in protecting the new converts from the resentment of the infidels. Temporal prosperity, as well as spiritual, shall be the possession of the faithful believer, though there are times of trial and depression, as Zoroaster well knew himself.

The follower of the *Druj* is the direct opposite of the Believer, in character and in actions; he is the seed of the Lie, Evil Thought and Arrogance; he chooses wrong, for he hates the words of Zoroaster; he opposes the blessings of Mazdah, and scorns devotion; when in power, he exer-

cises evil rule, bringing misery and destruction to the house, the clan, the district and the land; he uses violence, seeking to slay Zoroaster and the true believers, but shall himself be smitten down in this world, and at the Last Judgment be condemned to everlasting punishment. There are teachers of the Evil Spirit, who destroy the teachings of Zoroaster, and the designs of life established by Mazdah, and cause Good Thinking to be held in low repute; and the warfare against them is continually waged by Zoroaster in his missionary work. The positive doctrines of the *Druj*-followers we shall take up presently.

Before considering the teleology of the Zoroastrian religion, we may first observe that there is no provision for the exposure of the dead body to the beasts and birds, which seems to be a later engrafting on the faith. For Zoroaster says (*Yasna* 30:7; I paraphrase slightly, to secure clearness): "And to man Sovereignty came, and Good Thought and *Asha* (Right); and Devotion gave to his body permanence and duration, that at the Last Judgment he may be first of all." In this we have an allusion to persistence of the physical body after death until the day of judgment, which is quite incompatible with the later practice; and as the archangel Devotion, who confers permanence upon the body, is that archangel in special charge of the earth, we must infer that the original Zoroastrian practice was that of burial, and that therefore the doctrine of pollution by contact with dead bodies was not taught by Zoroaster; or else that the earth was immune to such contamination by the contact—unless indeed the holiness of earth is a later development in the religion.

But after death the souls of the dead pass on to the place of the great judgment, when Mazdah, attended by Asha, Good Thought, and Sovereignty, are waiting to pronounce the sentence of bliss or torment. Here is the

treasure-house in which all the good thoughts, words, and deeds—for this triad is constantly insisted on—have been stored up against this day; we must assume that the evil also has been stored up, for the two are placed in a balance, and that which is heavier decides the fate of the soul. Yet if there is a perfect balance between the two, the soul goes to a third place, neither heaven nor hell, reserved for those whose perfect equality of good and bad in this earthly life puts them in a position of neutrality in the contest of right and wrong. At this weighing, Zoroaster is present as the advocate of the faithful, that none of their merits may be forgotten; some passages seem even to place him in the position of the Judge, instead of Mazdah. Then the Judge, with a pointing of the hand, indicates the destiny of the soul. Next comes the crossing of the Bridge of the Separator: the righteous find it easy to traverse, and arrive on the other side at Paradise; but the evil find it growing narrower and narrower, until at last they fall off into hell below, where they are to subsist upon evil food, and to undergo everlasting torment.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the inevitability of the reward for good and bad is a dominant feature of Zoroaster's teaching; it appears throughout the Gathas. The awful punishment of the bad is kept continually before the mind of his auditor, that terror may be one influence toward conversion; yet there are also for the believer the promises of blessedness in the next life, and of prosperity on earth, as well as the desirability of doing right deeds for their own sake. Further, though there is this personal judgment on the individual after death, there is a constant looking forward to the day when the world will be cleansed of sin; this will accomplish the final defeat and subjection of the Evil Spirit, when he no longer has followers. At this time, all souls will pass through a flood of molten metal, which will

seem a bath of pleasant warmth to the righteous, but will either destroy or purge of evil the souls of the wicked: Zoroaster does not make the point clear. Thus the regeneration of the world should come; and to this process Zoroaster termed himself a *Saoshyant,* or future deliverer, almost *Saviour,* and he bestowed this title on those who were already or should later become active in the process. In fact, the prophet expected this millennium to come soon, even in his lifetime; but when such did not take place, later Zoroastrianism interpreted these deliverers, of whom Zoroaster spoke, as miraculously born sons of the Prophet, the last of whom will bring about the regeneration.

Now what are the good deeds which are enjoined upon the faithful follower of Mazdah, according to the preaching of his prophet? They are the care and the protection of the herds of cattle: in other words, Zoroaster preached a religion for a community of herdsmen, whose prosperity depended upon the welfare of the herds. Later Avestan writings include with cattle-tending the culture of the fields, and enjoin upon the faithful works of irrigation and the slaying of noxious beasts—creations of the Evil Spirit—that would injure the crops; but in the Gathas there is no trace of the precepts on agriculture. Zoroaster's own preachings, so far as his extant sermons indicate, were for a pastoral people pure and simple, not for one that had advanced to the stage combining agriculture with cattle-tending. The importance of these instructions to care for the herds may be seen in the attitude taken by the followers of the Evil Spirit; they are foes of cattle-nurture, desolating the pasture lands, and doing violence to the cow, whose life they take with joy. This violence is personified as the archdemon who is the especial enemy of the archangel Obedience, a matter already mentioned. On the other hand, the follower of Right diligently cares for the Cow;

the archangel Good Thought is the patron of cattle, and Devotion, whose special province is the earth, cares for the pasture lands. Plants were created by Mazdah to be the food of the cattle. Zoroaster prays to Mazdah that the husbandman may receive increased skill in his care for the herds. In return, the herds furnish men with meat and with milk (*Yasna*, 29:7).

Somewhat contradictory to this is the interesting hint at a story of the Fall of Man (*Yasna* 32:8): Yima, son of Vivahvant, in a desire to gratify men, gave them the flesh of the Cow to eat. This he did with the idea that the food would confer immortal life upon his subjects; but he had been deceived into this false belief by the demons of the Evil Spirit, who wished men to follow the evil course. Thereby sin became rife among men, not wholly because of the violence to the cattle in order to get the flesh for eating, but because of the attempt to seek immortality in a wrongful way. The preachings of Zoroaster, we must remember, distinctly permit the use of flesh of the Cow as food, as well as that of the milk.

For these reasons, the Cow, and more especially the Cow with calf, became in the language of Zoroaster a symbol of prosperity in this earthly life, and by an easy extension of meaning, the symbol of blessedness in the life after death; paradise is spoken of as "happy dwellings rich with pasture." The same figure is illustrated again when he says that the righteous man shall hereafter dwell in the pasture of Right and Good Thought, and in a time of despondency he says, "I know, O Mazdah, why I am powerless; it is because few cattle are mine, and few men."

Now the establishment of a religion for herdsmen is represented in this manner (*Yasna*, 29): The Cow is like man, endowed with the power of making a free choice between good and evil; for her the choice is between the herdsman and the raider. She chooses the

herdsman. In distress from the raids of the barbarians, the personified Spirit of the Kine comes before the Creator of the Kine, an aspect of Mazdah and yet not identical with Mazdah, and asks for a protector against the oppressors. The Creator of the Kine appeals to Asha to know if there is a judge and lord who may tend the kine, provide them with fodder, and drive off the violence of the followers of the Evil Spirit. Asha replies that there is none, and refers the Kine-Creator to Mazdah himself for help. At the appeal, Mazdah appoints Zoroaster to reveal his will and to serve as lord and judge over the herds. But the Kine-Spirit utters a sad lament that a weakling man should be set in a position demanding power, and fears that Zoroaster's help will not be effectual. Hereupon Zoroaster prays humbly to Mazdah for strength to execute his mission; and the Kine-Spirit, impressed by the evident sincerity of his prayer, expresses confidence that effectual help will now come to the herds. Such is, in summary form, Zoroaster's own account of his appointment as missioner of a herdmen's religion.

An interesting point about the Zoroastrian faith is that the word for demon, *daeva*, is the word which in most kindred languages designates a deity of good character. This has occasioned much discussion, the more so because the word for a good divinity in the Avesta is *Ahura*, while the same word etymologically in Sanskrit, *Asura*, denotes a demon. The latter point is of no consequence, for the Sanskrit word has independently acquired a bad meaning; the difficulty lies with the former word. We might inquire first, in this connection, what we can glean about the religion of the Persians before the coming of Zoroaster. The Gathas give us but a few points (*Yasna* 32: 12, 14; 48: 10): they hint at orgies in which the life of the Cow is slain, and the *haoma* or fermented juice of some plant is used. The *haoma* is not indeed mentioned by name in the Gathas, but the allusions

are unmistakable. One passage represents the followers of the false religion as saying, "Slay the Cow, that it may inspire the Death-Averter to help us." As Death-Averter (*duraosha*) is a constant epithet of the *haoma* in the later portions of the Avesta, there can be no doubt that the use of the *haoma* belongs to the religious rites which Zoroaster assails. Again, there can be no question of the meaning when he appeals to Mazdah to "smite the filth of the intoxicant, with which the false religionists evilly deceive." The slaying of the Cow in the orgies of this religion may perhaps point to some practice like the slaying of the bull in the rites of Mithra; but the indications are too scant for certainty. Yet we know that the deities *Mithra* and *Anahita* do not appear in Zoroaster's own teaching, but become prominent in the later Avesta; which unfortunately gives us no clue as to the date. The two are, however, given a place alongside Ahuramazda in the inscriptions of Artaxerxes I, who ruled the Persian Empire in the middle of the fifth century before Christ, where the three are a formal triad; but the added two are not to be found in the inscriptions of Xerxes, father of Artaxerxes, who celebrates Ahuramazda alone. This is important for our understanding of the development of Zoroastrianism. I have earlier stated that the ceremony with the *haoma* or *hom*-juice is the most evident portion of the Parsi ritual of to-day, as in fact it was in the time of the later sections of the Avesta; and as Zoroaster himself denounced its use in the strong terms which have been quoted, the use of the *haoma* was, like *Mithra* and *Anahita,* an importation into the new religion from the older and supplanted faith, which though defeated must still have kept a powerful hold on the individual mind. To this older faith may with plausibility be ascribed also the institution of the Towers of Silence for the disposal of the bodies of the dead. Indeed, it is quite likely that the priests of the older

religion, when definitely defeated in the struggle, accepted the situation, and bent their energies towards getting control of the priesthood of the new faith. That a class of men trained in the practice of ceremonies should have achieved their purpose is not astonishing, and we may well believe that they then shaped the new religion by importing some of the old practices which its founder had condemned. And this brings us back to the problem of the meaning of *daeva*, "demon" in Persian, but "kindly deity" in other languages. If we grant such a religion as we find hints of in the Gathas, a religion having at its head, presumably, the old nature gods, whose name was *daeva* in Persian, Zoroaster might fitly use their name with abhorrence, and degrade it to the meaning of demon. His own religion had personifications of abstractions at its head; the very word *daeva*, being connected with the word meaning *sky*, with Jupiter, Zeus, and the like, was not suitable to express his idea of a supernatural being, but was the very word to denote a false deity, evil and maleficent. This word, then, remains as a memorial of the fight waged by Zoroaster against the older religion; but many of the features of that older religion crept into the new faith in later times, as we have just seen.

### The Prophet Zoroaster.

And what of Zoroaster himself? Must he remain a vague personality, surrounded by the myths attached to him in the later writings of the religion which he founded? Or can we learn something of his life and of his experiences, out of his own words? A certain amount we do find there, but not enough to give more than a sketch; yet ample for a glimpse at the vigorous manhood, the trying career, the militant ministry of the prophet.

Zarathushtra, as his name was originally, was of the Spitama family, and was a descendant of one Haecathaspa. His mission to the world came to him in the form of a

series of seven visions. The first was one of Mazdah at the Last Judgment; the second that of Mazdah at the Creation. The other five were of the archangel Good Thought, who asked him whether he belonged to the evil or to the good, and for which party he would decide; who in the next vision instructed Zoroaster in the words of Mazdah; who then came to Zoroaster to observe his zeal for the right, and in the last vision to send him out upon his preaching. Thus ordained by Mazdah, he began his mission, proclaiming his appointment as protector of the herdsmen and of the cattle, and announcing the certainty of reward in the next life, for the good and the evil done in this bodily life. It was no easy task: in his endeavor to proselyte the world he incurred the hostility of the former religion, its priests the *Karapans* and the *Usij*, and its chieftains the *Kavis*. Foremost of his opponents were the priest Grehma and the chief Bendva. Often his life was sought; but Mazdah protected him. Often the Prophet was plunged into the deepest discouragement. Once he says (*Yasna*, 46: 1), "Whither, to what land, shall I go to escape? They keep me from the noble and from the priest, nor do the traders please me, nor the princes of the land, who follow the Druj. How shall I please thee, Mazdah Ahura?" Even specific occurrences find mention in his sermons: once (*Yasna* 44: 18) he had been promised a reward of ten mares, a stallion, and a camel—a bounty in keeping with a pastoral civilization—and had failed to receive it; he threatens the unnamed breaker of his word with the penalty that comes for such misconduct. Again (*Yasna* 51: 12), he instances the action of the favorite youth of a hostile chief or Kavi, who kept him and his two horses out shivering in the bitter cold, not allowing them to come in for refuge; even the place is named, the Winter Gate. But still the prophet persisted in his service of Mazdah, with prayer and praise and preaching,

proselyting and watching over the souls of men, and, in his own words, "presenting to Mazdah the life of his own body as an offering." Always thinking that the regeneration of the world would come soon, even within his lifetime, he asks that as a visible sign of Mazdah's power there be given to him at once the conversion of the world and the coming of the millennium; but this, alas, he was not to see. Until that time, he is the custodian of the good deeds of men, and at the Last Judgment he will present the faithful to the Judges, and will plead their cause; sometimes he even pictures himself as the judge, but that post he usually reserves for Mazdah.

In course of time he won converts, ultimately in no small number. Amongst these he mentions a kinsman, Madyoimaongha, whom later tradition represents as the first convert of all; and the Kavi or chief Vishtaspa and members of his court. The conversion of the chief was the turning point of his career, and may justly be termed his great success. Jamaspa, prime minister of Vishtaspa, accepted the faith, and received in marriage Porucista, daughter of the Prophet. Frashaoshtra, brother of Jamaspa, gave to the Prophet his daughter as wife; not his first wife certainly, for Zoroaster speaks of a son and of daughters, one of whom, as we have just seen, was of marriageable age. Besides these, he mentions as converts the family of Fryana, a Turanian, one of the barbarian tribes to the north who were afterwards the archenemies of the faith; a precious bit of evidence that Zoroaster did not limit his religion to any one people.

Such is the picture of the Prophet which we get in the Gathas, the poetical sermons which have come down from him to the present day, giving the impression of a vivid personality, and preaching the doctrines of a religion destined for a nation of herdsmen, who must deal justly and forcefully to preserve themselves and their flocks from the enemy, both temporal and spiritual. To the

later alterations and perversions of the faith, it has been impossible here to give more than a passing allusion. But let us remember that in its inception the religion of Zoroaster was one designed to meet a situation which was mainly economic, but that this religion had at its head a series of personifications of noble abstractions.

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# CHAPTER IX

## MOHAMMEDANISM

BY MORRIS JASTROW, JR.

### I

MOHAMMEDANISM or Islam is ushered into existence in the full daylight of history. Despite this fact we know only little more of its founder, Mohammed, that is authentic than we know of Jesus and not as much as we know of Buddha. To be sure, the pious Mohammedan will resent this assertion, and claim that we have the details of the prophet's career down to the most trivial incidents, handed down by reliable witnesses and embodied in an extensive literature known as Hadith, *i.e.*, "tradition." Alas! that this "tradition" about Mohammed breaks down under the test of critical examination, and the reported doings and sayings of the prophet turn out to be for the larger part inventions to reinforce orthodox beliefs and minutiæ in religious practices.[1] The generation which knew Mohammed was devoid of the historic sense and left no record of his doings and sayings except the one which is furnished in the imperfect collection of his sporadic utterances known as the Koran. Through the Koran we can penetrate into the psychology of the prophet's intricate personality, but it does not suffice for tracing his career in detail. Out of the mass of late and untrustworthy traditions, we can supplement the Koran by some details—but only enough to sketch his life in general outlines.

He was born of humble parentage in Mecca and in all probability in the year 570 A.D. There is an isolated

[1] See Goldziher's elaborate study of the Hadith Literature in his *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2, pp. 1–274.

tradition that his real name was Kutam. Mohammed (or better Muhammad, "the praised one" or "blessed") appears to be an epithet given to him. His father's name was Abdallah (servant of Allah), though the second element may have been a substitute for the name of some Arab god; and his mother is said to have been Amina ("the faithful one"). At a tender age Mohammed was left an orphan, the care of whom devolved first on his grandfather, Abd el-Muttalib, and after the death of the latter upon his maternal uncle, Abu Talib. Of his early years we know nothing till as a young man he entered the services of a rich widow, Khadijah, and as her agent entered upon mercantile pursuits. He subsequently married the widow, though she was considerably older, and had a large family—three sons and four daughters. The sons appear to have died before reaching manhood.

We next hear of him as a preacher, exhorting the people of Mecca to cast aside the traditional worship of gods and to recognize Allah alone as the one god of the universe. This, the burden of his message, is repeated in many keys and in endless variations throughout his public career. "There is no god but Allah" becomes the inspiration of his life, while the corollary "Mohammed is the messenger of Allah" merely emphasizes his position as the mouthpiece of Allah, sent to proclaim him to his own people, as at other times messengers had been sent to other peoples—notably to Jews and Christians. He appears to have been about 40 years old when he first made his public appearance. The twenty-two years of his career as a "warner," as he likes to call himself, are divided into two almost equal periods. The first twelve are spent in Mecca, where he succeeds in gathering a small circle of followers about him, but also arouses considerable opposition by his denunciation of established customs. This opposition, as well as brighter prospects of meeting with success elsewhere, prompts him to

leave Mecca for Medina in the year 622—an event designated as the Hejira, *i.e.*, "the flight," from which the Mohammedans date their official era. In Medina, situated some distance to the north of Mecca, he attracts great attention. His followers increase, and combining in a strange manner worldly ambitions with missionary zeal he acquires an influential position which in time makes him the virtual ruler of the place. We may trust the tradition which depicts him as the prophet militant in Medina, organizing marauding bands and dividing the booty derived from attacking caravans among his soldiery. He occasionally meets with reverses, but on the whole gains in power until he feels strong enough to make an attack on Mecca. He enters the city in triumph and proceeds with his followers to the ancient sanctuary in the city, known as the Caaba (from its "cube"-like shape), and proclaims it as the "house of Allah." It becomes from this time on the central sanctuary of Mohammedanism.

In the closing years of Mohammed's career the religious movement inaugurated by him begins to assume the dimensions of a national uprising. The Arabic tribes scattered throughout the Peninsula become conscious of their unity. Mohammed as the prophet proclaiming a divine message to the Arabic people gives to the many separate groups a rallying cry that unites them under the standard of Islam. He fires their ambition of bringing the whole world to a recognition of Allah. Before Mohammed passed away at Medina in the year 632, at the age of sixty-two, practically all of Arabia had come under his control. He gathers able lieutenants about him who aid in the work of the organization of the Arabs into a great military camp, though the work is not perfected till after his death.

Mohammed's mission thus takes on a two-fold aspect —religious and political. The time was ripe as a result

of the disintegration of the old faith for a forward step, involving the recognition of unity in the universe in place of a diversity of more or less independent powers. The presence of Jews and Christians in large numbers in various parts of Arabia was an important factor in leading to the decline of Arabic heathendom. Mohammed no doubt came into contact with Jews and Christians, from whom he acquired an imperfect knowledge of these higher faiths, together with smatterings of Old and New Testament stories, though in their Midrashic rather than in their Biblical garb. The Jews, more particularly, had amplified the Biblical tales of the Patriarchs and of such figures as Moses and Aaron with fanciful accretions, spun out with homiletic intent. Mohammed accepted these tales with little appreciation of their deeper import, just as the Christian doctrines of the Trinity and of the Pauline conception of Jesus lay beyond his mental horizon. The attempt to assimilate what he could not understand led to a frightful confusion and to most crude interpretations of both Judaism and Christianity, though, in so far as these faiths followed along the lines of Semitic thought, they appealed to his mental make-up and gave him much of what was valuable in his religious message. It is more difficult to account for the political union of the Arabs which Mohammed succeeded in bringing about. No doubt the hope of plunder and the ambition of conquest were aroused by him, but as one of those rare individuals, born to leadership, he must also have stirred up feelings of a higher order that had lain dormant among the Arabs. Stirred to the depths, the Arabs became an irresistible force, carrying the new faith with the help of the sword to Persia on the east, to Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt on the west. Northern Africa and southern Spain as well as Sicily became Mohammedan states, and although a definite limit was set to further northern expansion by the victory of Charles Martel at

Tours in 732, Mohammedanism within the conquered districts not only maintained its hold but spread northward throughout Africa and eastward to India, to China and to the islands of the Malay Archipelago, as well as throughout the section of Europe that became part of the Turkish Empire at its height. To this day, Mohammedanism, though split up into large divisions and various sects, retains its hold upon more than two hundred millions.

## II

How are we to account for Mohammed, how explain the profound impression made upon his surroundings by one who as he himself admits—and as the Koran shows—was an ignorant man? Without position to enforce his authority, without a powerful clique to aid him in his mission, without a John the Baptist as his forerunner, without a Paul to formulate his doctrine into an elaborate theological system, though that was eventually done by Mohammedan theologians and philosophers, Mohammed stands forth a solitary figure, crying to unwilling ears, derided at first, denounced as a madman, subject to persecution, and yet destined to triumph in a manner that makes him still almost 1300 years after his death the central figure of Islam. Here, indeed, is a problem for the psychologist, the historian and the student of religions to grapple with.

Until a century ago, to be sure, the problem did not exist. The prejudices of Christian Europe, reinforced by ignorance, had made of Mohammed a strange mixture of a cunning fanatic and a cruel, almost bestial tyrant, with scarcely a redeeming feature, unless it were his success in imposing pernicious teachings upon benighted masses.

It was left for Carlyle to see with his keen psychological insight that the picture drawn by European writers could not be true. As a historical portrait, Carlyle's

essay on Mohammed in his "Heroes and Hero Worship," depicting Mohammed as the Priest-Hero, has at the present time little value. It has been superseded by the active researches of able European and American scholars and by the publication of native Arabic sources for the study of Mohammedanism which when Carlyle wrote were unknown. As a study, however, of the problem presented by the appearance of Mohammed in surroundings where one would least have expected him, Carlyle is most suggestive and still worth reading.

In the seventh century of our era, Arabia was still the centre of Semitic hordes as it had been from time immemorial, though settlements of Arabs had been made throughout Palestine and Syria, in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Despite the strong cultural influences emanating from these lands, to which must be added southern Arabia, where a high order of civilization was reached as early as the second millennium before this era, the bulk of the Arabs had kept to the nomadic life; and even in the settlements within Arabia where, along the route leading from Syria to Yemen, cities had sprung up, the old animistic beliefs, investing trees, wells and stones with sanctity, still held sway. The sacred sites to which visits continued to be paid remained the same, except that at those which had acquired a prominence above the average the simple habitat of the guardian of the site had become a shrine of larger proportions. There was no central sanctuary, as there was no union among the tribes. Mecca in the days of Mohammed was merely one of several prominent towns that had a sanctuary of more than local importance—due in the case of Mecca in part to the fact that the city lay on the route to Okaz, where an annual market was held which brought Arabic tribes together from all parts of Arabia. In addition barter and exchange were carried on, tribal councils met, intertribal disputes were adjusted and contests of strength and

skill held. Such reunions served to keep alive the consciousness of the common bond of descent and tradition among the tribes. There was, to be sure, a marked difference between the nomadic Arabs and those who had been weaned to settled conditions of life; and it is not accidental that Mohammed's family had been residents of a city for several generations past. As already suggested, the presence of many Jews and Christians in the settled portions of Arabia acted as a leaven and led to a weakening of faith in the ancient beliefs, though the rites arising from them continued to be practised. Such influences may well have continued quietly for centuries without producing marked external changes. Stories are told of Arabs who had embraced Judaism or Christianity, but even after making full allowance for the influence exerted on Mohammed by the presence of higher faiths, the secret of the hold which the new belief reached must be sought in the study of his own mental and emotional equipment.

The Arab, even the unlettered, is given to contemplation. As a child of nature he is impressed by the phenomena around him, and we may assume that the wildness and alternate impressiveness and melancholy of austere mountain ranges with long stretches of forbidding wastes were factors in leading to this contemplative disposition upon which many writers have dwelt since Renan first emphasized the trait. Viewing Mohammed in this light we can understand how an impressionable nature, gifted with imagination, and swayed by emotions all the stronger for being uncontrolled, should have passed through a mental struggle of which tradition has preserved a record that is in part, at least, reliable. He is said to have retired to a cave outside of Mecca from time to time and there to have meditated amidst the solitude of the wild, rocky region on the mysteries of the universe and of human existence. What did it all mean—this

never-ending play of nature, this regular succession of phenomena in the heavens and on earth, this surging mass of humanity, struggling and toiling as though driven by a hidden force, endeavoring to rise superior to surroundings and ever thrown back by stronger and apparently hostile powers? Renan, to whose views a reference has been made, set up the thesis many years ago that the monotony of nature in Arabia, the home of the Semites, led naturally to the thought of a single power controlling the universe.[2] In this extreme form the thesis, though defended with a wealth of learning and an ingenuity and brilliancy that challenges admiration, has not been accepted. A monotheistic conception of divine government appears on the surface to be a philosophical abstraction developed in schools of thought rather than an intuition suggested by the impression made by nature upon man. We find the thought suggested by the theologians of ancient Babylonia who superimposed their comparatively advanced speculations on a basis of primitive myths. We find a remarkable movement in the direction of monotheism setting in in Egypt as early as the fifteenth century before this era, though likewise as the outcome of speculation in a land that had attained a high order of civilization. In the case of the Hebrews we find a genuine monotheism developed not by the priest of the sanctuaries but by a body of men who, while not schooled in philosophic thought, yet transformed a national Yahweh into a Power of universal scope through an emotional rather than an intellectual process, through the inward realization that the fate of mankind was in the hands of a Being, acting by self-imposed laws of righteousness. What the Hebrew Prophets taught was ethical rather than speculative monotheism. It was precisely this kind of monotheism that Mohammed preached. His early utter-

[2] *Histoire Générale et Système Comparé des Langues Sémitiques* (4th ed), p. 6 ff.

ances convey the impression of burning thoughts that seek for an expression, and that are marked by their spontaneous emotionalism in combination with a strong ethical tinge. Mohammed was incapable of realizing the philosophical or theological implications of his central doctrine that "there is no god but Allah," but his strong emotional nature, stirred by the majesty of divine Power as it manifested itself in the impressive nature about him, and moved by an intense sympathy with the struggles and sufferings of mankind, was able to penetrate to the thought of the unity behind the phenomena of nature and to conceive of this unity as a great Father, stern at times as a father must be to wayward children and yet filled with love and tenderness for his offspring. Power in harmonious combination with love and justice is the dominant note in Mohammed's conception of Allah.

It is of the essence of a monotheistic view of the universe, interpreted in terms of ethics, that it brushes aside difficulties which a purely philosophical concept would encounter, such as the question of free will in a world controlled by an omnipotent and omniscient Power, ordaining and foreseeing all that happens, or the still more perplexing conundrum how to account for unnecessary and unmerited suffering and the flourishing of injustice and of wickedness in a world created by a benevolent Being. To Mohammed as to the Hebrew prophets, reaching their conclusions by the strength of their emotional nature, these difficulties did not exist, though the Mohammedan theologians of later generations were obliged to grapple with them, when the attempt was made to formulate the teachings of Mohammed into a system. Mohammed produced no system; he was incapable of doing so. To him the alpha and omega of the faith which after internal struggles he attained was an equation—Allah *is* Allah, the most high, the merciful, the just and the forgiving.

There was nothing original in his teaching about Allah, except the force with which he enunciated his conviction throughout his public career that there was only one supreme Being to whom worship was to be paid. Even the name Allah, "the God," paralleled in the Hebrew *elôah*, which in a plural form becomes a generic designation for "god," is not original with Mohammed. It appears to have been in general use among the Arabs as an epithet of any god conceived as powerful and strong. Mohammed tempered the austerity of the conception of a single all-powerful Being above and behind the phenomena of the Universe by the attributes of love and mercy, and the readiness to listen to appeal which his intense sympathy with struggling and suffering mankind led him to associate with Allah. If, therefore, we find him in this respect following in the footsteps of the Hebrew prophets, as also in those of Jesus, who seeks entirely to set aside the austerity involved in the conception of a strong god by a still more decided emphasis on His love and mercy, are we not justified in assuming that there is something in the temper created under natural surroundings that produces men of the type of Amos and Hosea; of Jesus and Mohammed—men not marked by intense intellectualism, certainly not profound thinkers as that term is ordinarily understood, but dominated by strong emotions, gifted with spiritual insight, of a contemplative and somewhat melancholy disposition, and impelled by their intense human sympathies? All these qualities taken together give to the utterances of Mohammed the stamp of an elemental force; and this applies more particularly to the earlier Suras of the Koran in which the sentences, loosely strung together, are blurted out with the power of an impetuous stream, seeking for an outlet. The revelation of Allah so far as Mohammed had any conception of it was of the order

voiced by Amos to justify his denunciation of the sins of his people and his warnings of coming disaster:

> The lion roars, who is not afraid?
> Yahweh speaks, who will not prophesy? (Amos 3: 8.)

Allah had spoken to Mohammed—through the Angel Gabriel, as tradition has it—therefore, he *must* speak.

There can be no question of the profound sincerity of the man during the early stages of his career. The vehemence of his denunciation of those who refused to listen to his message, who persisted in recognizing other Beings by the side of Allah, clinging to practices incompatible with the demands made by a god like Allah, and, above all, the poetical character of those snatches of his early utterances that have been preserved, testify to this sincerity. The courage of Mohammed, which is one of the outstanding traits throughout his career, points in the same direction. The opposition which his rebellious utterances aroused and which in time became threatening did not swerve him from his path. He appears disheartened at times, but continues to speak out. The converts to the cause were few during the first years. Tradition has it that a slave in Mohammed's household was his first follower and it seems certain that his wife Khadijah stood by her husband, when those about him assailed him. In return he remained faithful to her and even after she had passed away and he took other wives, more attractive in their person, the memory of Khadijah appears to have exercised its influence over him, though many of the stories told of their relationship are clearly apocryphal. Another early convert who was destined to play a most prominent rôle was a relative Ali who became his son-in-law. It would also appear that the conversion of Abu Bekr, a prominent merchant of Mecca, was a decisive factor in bringing the movement to more prominent notice. All the early followers of Mohammed

who became known in tradition as his "Companions" showed their attachment to him. Only a sincere man can arouse such devoted followers as Mohammed gathered about him, and who, when the opposition to him reached a climax in the year 622 A.D., were ready to follow him to Medina, where, as we have seen, he laid the foundation of the Mohammedan state.

The Hejira (or so-called "flight") marks in almost every respect a turning-point in Mohammed's career. The struggles of the Mecca period were followed by the rapid successes that marked the change of his activities to Medina, but even glorifying tradition cannot conceal the weakness which he displayed in his new rôle as a secular leader. The Mohammed of Medina justifies the appeal to force as a means of securing the triumph of Islam. Acts of cruelty, particularly towards the Jews settled in and near Medina—who angered him by opposing his claim to being a follower of Abraham—are recorded that suggest a profound change of mental development in order to account for the transition of the Mohammed of Mecca to the Mohammed of Medina. His "revelations" degenerate into the *ordres du jour* of a general, self-conscious utterances to aid in carrying out worldly ambitions. He also becomes prolix and the later Suras in contrast to the earlier ones are long and prosy, catering to the fondness of Arabs for tales, in order to regale his hearers rather than to edify and instruct them. He adds nothing to the message of earlier days, and yet it must be confessed that but for the policy that he pursued in Medina he would not have aroused the national consciousness of the Arabs. He fired their imagination with the prospect of a world-empire under the domination of the religion that he founded; and though he himself, like Moses, was not permitted to enter the Holy Land, he left to his successors as a legacy the policy of spreading the Koran with the power of the sword.

Mohammed thus presents the unique phenomenon of a founder of a religion who also leads to the establishment of a vast empire. Jesus breaks the national bond uniting his people by substituting for it a spiritual union, freed from national or racial limitations. Buddha is totally indifferent to national interests and becomes the preacher of individual salvation, irrespective of political or social associations. Zarathustra preaches his doctrine to his people alone. Moses creates the Hebrew nation, but although the political ideal is bound up with the exclusive worship of Yahweh as the protector of the nation, he can hardly be said to be the founder of the larger Yahwism—certainly not the founder of a universal monotheism. Mohammed creates a world religion, Islam, and the Arabic nation as well. In Mecca he lays the foundation of a religion, capable of making its appeal to humanity at large; in Medina he stirs up the imagination of his followers to a pan-Arabic movement which was destined in the course of a few generations to exceed the fondest dreams of its promoters.

Tradition reports that Mohammed was busy during the last year of his career in planning an expedition that was to carry the religion beyond the bounds of Arabia. This is open to question, though the example of Christianity may have led him to indulge in such a hope. The year 632 put an end to any further ambitions that he may have harbored. At the beginning of that year he was seized with an illness that never left him. Worn out by a life of toil and excitement, he was in no condition to withstand the ravages of disease. His condition grew steadily worse and on the morning of the 8th of June he passed away. The story goes that just before he died he dragged his weary body to the courtyard of his house to give a final greeting to the congregation assembled for prayer, led by Abu Bekr. A few hours later he sank into the lap of his wife, Ayesha, and closed

his eyes in death. Impressive though hardly authentic is the tradition which represents Abu Bekr declaring to those who would not believe that Mohammed had passed away, "He who worships Mohammed let him know that Mohammed is dead, but he who worships Allah, let him know that Allah lives and will not die."

## III

The name given to the religion which Mohammed founded was Islam, based on the frequent use of the verb in this form in the Koran. It conveys the idea of "making one's peace" with Allah by a voluntary surrender to Allah's will. "Submit yourselves to Allah," says the prophet on many occasions. Islam is, therefore, a religion of submission. The name of the religion reflects the simplicity and naïveté of Mohammed's conception of Divine Government. He *feels* the presence of the superior Power. To him Allah is something intensely real, almost tangible, and yet it can hardly be said that there is any mystic element involved in his thoroughly emotional submission to the will of Allah.

The relationship in which Mohammed places himself towards Allah throws further light upon his conception of the divine arbiter of fates. Though devoid of any historical spirit in the proper sense of the term, the conviction is strong enough with him that Allah, the eternal, has at all times revealed himself to chosen messengers. Man could not through the effort of his reason alone reach to a knowledge of Allah. Mohammed's Allah is the same who manifested Himself to a long series of messengers beginning with Adam and ending with Mohammed as the one who put the "seal" on the utterances of his long line of predecessors. Divine revelation is thus a continuous process; and it will readily be seen how on the basis of such a view Mohammedan theologians could build up a system in which Islam would be the

coping stone. The chain of prophets leading in unbroken links through Jesus, John the Baptist, the Hebrew prophets, Elijah, Samuel, Joshua, Moses, Abraham, Noah back to Adam, forms his strongest plea for calling upon Jews and Christians to heed his message to "submit themselves," even though he was primarily sent to preach to his own people. It is significant that even at the present time the rock on which the temple of Solomon stood in Jerusalem and around which the Mosque Haram esh-Sherif is built is almost as sacred to Arabs as the black stone in the corner of the Caaba at Mecca. Strange that in both Jerusalem and Mecca a stone, as a trace of the primitive Semitic stone cult, should form the sacred object, which suggests that in one sense Islam is a more direct expression of a genuine Semitic evolution of religion than either Judaism or Christianity, into both of which, and more particularly into Christianity, other than purely Semitic elements have entered.

This marked trait of Islam finds its strongest illustration in the Koran, which, containing the authentic utterances of Mohammed, forms for this reason our main source, in some respects our only source, for Mohammed's view of the religion which he founded. The circumstances under which the collection was made within a few years after Mohammed's death are detailed in the Hadith literature, but only so much of the "tradition" can be regarded as reliable which associates the gathering of Mohammed's utterances during the Mecca and Medina periods with the three lieutenants of the prophet who in turn became the head of the new state after Mohammed's death, namely, Abu Bekr, Omar and Othman,[3] and with Mohammed's secretary, Zaid ibn-Thabit. There is every reason to believe that shortly after Mohammed had ac-

[3] The title "Caliph" given to those who assume the authority of Mohammed designates them as the "successor" or "substitute" of Mohammed.

quired a leading position in Medina his utterances were written down by some of his followers, because of the supreme importance that came to be attached to his words. In the earlier years this was not the case, but the impression made by the novel style of his warnings and denunciations, by his allusions to Biblical characters and tales, by his descriptions of the glories of Paradise in store for those who followed in the path of Allah was sufficiently pronounced to ensure their oral transmission, especially among a people accustomed to handing down stories, poems and sayings by word of mouth.

The Koran is not a large book. By a rough estimate it is about one-fourth the size of the Old Testament, and, considering that it comprises utterances stretching over twenty years, the small size is in itself a guarantee of its authenticity, as it is also a proof that we have not a complete record of all that the prophet said during his public career. The style of the Koran is individualistic. Mohammed could well challenge those who made sport of him to produce anything like it. Frankly admitting himself to be an ignorant man—he probably could neither read nor write—he points to the style of his utterances as a proof that what he says is imparted to him by a Divine revelation. In its final form the Koran was divided into 114 Suras, the larger ones at the beginning, the shorter ones at the end,[4] with a headline to each, indicating whether a Sura was revealed at Mecca or Medina.[5] There is, however, no further attempt at chronological order, and so we are left to unreliable tradition regarding the circumstances under which a Sura was pronounced or to a critical estimate of internal evidence for the more precise order of the chapters.[6]

[4] An exception is made in the case of the first Sura, which, consisting of seven verses, is the "doxology" of Mohammedanism.

[5] In the case of some there is a doubt whether they belong to the first or second period.

[6] Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorâns*, 2d ed., by F. Schwally (1909).

At first blush, a confusing blending of statements and arguments, interspersed with sharp denunciations, bits of stories, word pictures of Allah's power and of his mercy, eloquent appeals, and endless repetitions, it seems amazing that such a collection of utterances should have acquired a sacred character. Yet here is the fact that at the present time more than two hundred millions of worshipers still regard the Koran as divinely inspired from beginning to end, and as the supreme guide of life. The explanation of the phenomenon is to be found in the profound impression made by Mohammed upon his contemporaries. What he says comes to be viewed by his followers as a revelation, because *he* says it. The Islamic theory of revelation thus rests entirely upon the impression made by a single personality, in contrast to Judaism where it develops from the belief in a group chosen by the Deity, and to the Christian doctrine, which rests upon the annulment of an old covenant in favor of a new one, but likewise deriving its initiative from a supreme ruler and not as the reflection of any single personality.

Viewed in this light, as an expression of Mohammed's personality, the Koran at closer range becomes a remarkably interesting and in some respects a fascinating work. As we make the attempt in a sympathetic spirit to allow the influence of the prophet's personality play on our emotions, we discover many passages of striking power and not a few of a certain strange beauty.[7]

The miscellaneous contents of the Suras of the Koran make it impossible to give more than a general characterization of the collection. There is no logical arrangement within a Sura, no gradual unfolding of an argument, nothing in short which we would associate with either an essay or a sermon. There is in all the Suras, and particularly in the longer ones, a sudden transition from one subject to the other, often so sudden as to be

[7] *E.g.*—Sura 2, 15–19; 3, 112–114; 22, 1–4; 38, 1–9; 56, 1–24.

perplexing. All is in confusion, and the general impression conveyed is that the Suras are a conglomeration of fragments, loosely put together. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the task of systematizing the teachings of Mohammed on the basis of the Koran, differences of opinion arose which led to the formation of sects, though other factors contributed to the splitting up of the Mohammedans into many groups. Almost any philosophical opinion or theological interpretation of the doctrines of Islam could find a support in the Koran. Advocates of the freedom of the will appealed to the utterances of the prophet, equally with those who carried to an extreme the belief that all was preordained by Allah.[8] After a struggle lasting for several centuries, in the course of which a large variety of "heresies" came to the fore, Mohammedan orthodoxy triumphed, free discussion was virtually suppressed, and Islam settled down to a division into two large groups, the followers of Sunna, or "tradition," and those who deviated therefrom, chiefly, in not recognizing the first three "successors" or caliphs, Abu Bekr, Omar and Othman, as legitimate and making Mohammed's second cousin and son-in-law Ali his direct heir. This was the party known as Shi'a—a term which conveys the force of "partisan." The strength of the Shiites lay in Persia, and this, perhaps for the reason that although the movement is of Arabic origin the idea of the incarnation of the deity in a human being, which became a leading principle of Shi'ism, fitted in with inherited Aryan beliefs in the divine character of kingship. To the Shi'ites Ali became such an "incarnation" —a thought abhorrent to the followers of Sunna. Only one who was divinely chosen could, according to them, be the successor of Mohammed. That person, it was

[8] See for details Goldziher's authoritative work, *Mohammed and Islam* (English translation by Mrs. L. H. Seelye), especially chapters 3 and 4.

claimed, was Ali and after him in a regular family line other successors known as Imams or "leaders." Several other religious beliefs, of an Aryan rather than Semitic stripe, were introduced into Islam by the Persian followers of Mohammed.

Within the circles of Sunna, which comprise the Mohammedans of Arabia, Palestine, most of Syria, Egypt and northern Africa, as well as of India, four divisions, or rather "rites," are recognized as orthodox, known from their founders as Hanbalites, Shafi'ites, Malikites and Hanifites.[9] They differ from one another in matters of ritual, while agreeing substantially in their doctrinal interpretations.

## IV

Taking up, in conclusion, the chief rites of Islam in further illustration of the general character of the religion, we must again bear in mind that the systematization of these rites is the work of the theologians on the basis of the Koran, to meet the requirements of the growing communities of followers and the organization of the Mohammedan state.

It is not easy to follow this process of organization in detail, though it would seem that prayer (*salat*) in unison was one of the first steps to be taken. There is no adjuration more frequently repeated in the Koran than the one to "be steadfast in prayer." The institution of daily prayers in imitation of Jews and Christians was one of the most radical innovations introduced by Mohammed into the lives of the Arabs. Exactly why he fixed upon five periods daily, instead of the three observed by pious Jews, we do not know.[10] The prayer was at

[9] On the geographical distribution of these divisions, see Goldziher, *op. cit.*, p. 55 ff.

[10] On the most sacred day of the Jewish calendar, the Day of Atonement, the Jews have five prayer periods, and it may be that this suggested to Mohammed that number for daily worship.

first merely a gathering of the faithful with Mohammed as the leader. The example of the prophet became the pattern followed to this day. Public prayer in the mosques is offered always under a leader who takes his place in front of the worshipers and leads in the exercise, much as the head of a company gives his commands. Leader and worshiper direct their faces towards the Caaba at Mecca. The service consists of several "cycles" of prayers, and each cycle of a number of postures, carried out in unison by the leader—with the worshipers arranged in rows behind him.[11] Prayer thus conventionalized and having the appearance of a military drill is a religious exercise rather than a spontaneous prompting of the desire for communion with a higher Being. The form and formulas of prayers are thus alike stereotyped, with the praise of Allah and a recital of his majesty as the main features, and the individual request conspicuous for its absence. The *salat* (prayer) is essentially a humble acknowledgment five times daily of Allah's greatness and of his supreme control of everything.

So far as the external form of Islam is concerned, the influence of Judaism is strongest perhaps in the public service. On the other hand, Christian influence is betrayed in the institution of a fast period patterned after the Lenten season and extending for a period of one lunar month. Mohammed fixed upon a month, known as Ramadan, which even in pagan Arabic had acquired a special significance as a period of truce from all hostilities. Abstention from food from sunrise to sunset made this fast the most arduous requirement imposed upon the prophet's followers, only to some extent relieved by the permission to indulge in eating and drinking during the night, so as to prepare for the daily fast. Inasmuch as the Mohammedans still follow the lunar calendar of

[11] See Lane, *Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, i, pp. 90–113.

ancient days, with no adjustment to the solar year, the season in which Ramadan falls varies constantly. When it falls during the hot summer months, the hardship involved in abstaining daily from water as well as from food for a period of considerably more than twelve hours is a terrible strain, particularly since the labors of the day go on uninterruptedly. Indeed, outside of the festivals in memory of the saints which are times of feasting, of processions and of jollifications, and generally represent old local cults to which a Mohammedan character has been given,[12] Islam has neither festivals nor an institution like the Christian and Jewish Sabbath. Friday, to be sure, has acquired a special significance but merely as a day of "gathering," [13] when the obligation to attend the public service is more strictly observed, without, however, any cessation of the daily toil.

The fast (*saum*) of Ramadan, though strictly observed throughout the Mohammedan world, has never acted as a factor in preserving the hold of the religion upon its adherents as is the case with the daily prayer, nor does it serve to impress upon the individual the sense of belonging to a world-wide community as does a third "pillar" of the faith—the pilgrimage to Mecca. In making this visit to the holy city in which Mohammed saw the light of day obligatory upon every Mohammedan, Islam builded probably better than it knew. With the spread of Islam by conquest throughout the East and into parts of western Europe, the religion became international in scope, and the allegiance to Mecca emphasized by the pilgrimage was the chief factor in maintaining amidst all vicissitudes through the succession of centuries down to our days the ideas and ideals of catholic Islam. The Mecca pilgrimage, as it forms the most striking visible

[12] Such saints' days are common in Egypt, Palestine and Persia—but not in Arabia.

[13] It is known as the *Yaum el-Jami'*, "day of gathering."

bond among all those who in whatever part of the world follow the standard of the prophet, is also the strongest bulwark against the entrance of modern currents of thought into the religion. This is all the more noteworthy because the Haj [14]—as the pilgrimage is called—has so little about it which is connected with the higher and essential aspects of Islam. It represents the grafting of an old ceremonial antedating the time of Mohammed by many centuries on to a religion which has its roots in a revolt against the very conceptions of religion of which the ceremonial is an expression. The researches of European scholars [15] have shown that the real goal of the pilgrimage was originally a sacred mountain Muzdalifa in the valley of Mina, just outside of Mecca. Semitic hordes living in mountainous regions placed the seat of their gods on the mountain tops, in addition to seeing manifestations of the divine in trees, wells and stones. In a sense every mountain was sacred and one need only recall the sanctity attaching in Palestine to Sinai, Nebo, Gerizim, Seir, Zion and Carmel to realize how deeply ingrained the conception was among the Semites. It became customary for Arabs to pay an annual visit to Muzdalifa. Three days were spent at the Mount, the ceremonies culminating in a general sacrifice of sheep to the deity to whom the Mount was sacred. In Mecca there was an ancient sanctuary, built around a stone that had acquired special sanctity, and it was natural for those who came from various parts of Arabia by this way to the mountain to stop at the sanctuary to pay their respects to the god of the Caaba. Mecca thus acquired considerable importance long before the days of Mohammed. It was, however, the accident of Mohammed's birth in Mecca and his own attachment to the Caaba, of which

[14] Meaning "circuit," *i.e.*, around a sanctuary.

[15] See especially Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Mekkaansch Feest*, Leiden, 1880.

the clan Koreish to which he belonged were the guardians, that transformed the old pilgrimage to Muzdalifa to an act of worship centring around the Mecca sanctuary. Mohammed could not cut himself entirely loose from time-honored associations and so the Caaba became for him the "house of Allah" *par excellence*. His example in performing the traditional rites at Mecca and on the way to Muzdalifa on the occasion of his last visit to his native town became established usage among his followers, leading to the duty resting upon every Mohammedan to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime.

There was, to be sure, just as much or just as little reason for connecting Islam with Muzdalifa as with the Caaba. The rites performed at both belong to the same order and are survivals of primitive Semitic religion. At Muzdalifa the chief rite was, as we have seen, an animal sacrifice; at Mecca it was the circuit around the Caaba, generally seven times, and kissing the sacred black stone [16] at each turn. There were other sacred stones near the sanctuary, and to this day it is customary to stand on these stones or to touch them so as to acquire their beneficent influence. Little chapels have been built around four of such sacred stones in the large courtyard surrounding the Caaba, each chapel being dedicated to one of the four orthodox sects or divisions of Islam. A further trace of stone cult is to be seen in the ceremony of throwing stones at three strange-looking rocks in the valley of Mina, for the purpose, as it is now said, of driving off evil demons personified by these rocks, but which at one time must have been regarded as sacred. Further, within the colonnaded enclosure around the Caaba [17] there is a

[16] On the character of this stone as for all details regarding the pilgrimage, see Burton's classical work, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al Medinah and Meccah* (many editions)—one of the most fascinating works that have ever been written.

[17] See the illustration in Snouck Hurgronje's *Mekka* (The Hague, 1888), Pl. 2, or Traugott Mann, *Der Islam* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 11.

sacred well, known as Zemzem, out of which it is regarded to be both a privilege and sacred duty to drink as part of the pilgrimage ceremonial. We have thus a combination of stone, water and mountain worship in connection with the pilgrimage, and only the fourth element of primitive Semitic worship, the sacred tree, is lacking to make the cycle complete. Finally, besides the sacred Mount Muzdalifa, there are two small hills just outside of the enclosure around the Caaba at a distance of a few hundred feet from one another and known as Sawa and Marwa. Between these hills the pilgrim runs forward and backward seven times.

Now, to connect these strange and purely primitive rites with Islam, the Mohammedan theologians evolved series of formulæ, prayers, if you choose, containing the praise of Allah and extracts from the Koran, to be recited frequently by the pilgrims and in connection with the rather complicated ceremonies,[18] but the ceremonies themselves are far older and of independent origin. The Haj or pilgrimage thus turns out to be artificially grafted on to Islam. Even the month selected for it, known as the Zu-l-Haj, "month of Haj," is the traditional period in which the visit to Muzdalifa was performed generations and centuries before the appearance of Mohammed; and as a final proof that the attachment of a visit to the Caaba is an after-thought, one may instance the fact that the circuit round the Caaba may be made at any time during the year, as may also the running between Sawa and Marwa and drinking out of Zemzem or standing on the stones around the Caaba, whereas the journey through the valley of Mina to the sacred Mount can be undertaken only during the "month of pilgrimage." It is more

[18] Snouck Hurgronje in his standard work on Mecca, chapter 2, pp. 28–47, has shown how an elaborate organization was perfected in the city to provide for the pilgrims coming from all parts of the Mohammedan world and to guide them in the correct performance of the various rites and ceremonies.

particularly the 10th day of this month which must be passed on Muzdalifa. The night of the 9th is spent at the foot of the mountain and early the next morning the ascent is made to greet the sun at its rise. In order to give also this rite of worship a Mohammedan character, it is provided that the pilgrims must listen to a long sermon on Islam while gathered on the mountain.

Mohammed in thus setting the example for all times of observing rites that had merely the sanction of antiquity to commend them, shows himself to be a child of the age in which he lived, despite his departure from ancient beliefs. The power of traditional custom was too strong for him, but on the other hand his retention of old rites, though foreign to his religious teachings, made it easier for the Arabs to accept his message. Islam, in fact, was never hostile to the retention of popular beliefs, such as the one in *jinns* or demons, as long as they did not interfere with the central doctrine of Allah's supreme power. Popular customs having their roots in a distant antiquity, such as hanging votive objects on sacred trees,[19] were retained with little or no consciousness of their being survivals of beliefs inconsistent with advanced religious conceptions. The hold that the Haj has upon Mohammedans everywhere is amazingly strong. The greatest longing of every believer is to see the Caaba, to kiss the black stone and to perform the other rites. He who has once performed the pilgrimage is secure against any temptation to be weaned from the faith of his forefathers. Each year tens of thousands [20] do not shun the hardship of wandering on foot for months to reach the sacred spot. No sacrifice is too great, no exertion too heavy; and if one cannot go oneself, one scrapes enough

[19] See many examples of the survival of primitive rites in Palestine and Syria among the Mohammedan population in Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day* (Chicago, 1902).

[20] It is estimated that the Haj brings over one hundred thousand Moslems each year to Mecca.

money together to purchase a substitute. The railroad communication now established from Damascus to Medina will further stimulate the pious to increased efforts to obtain the wherewithal to carry out the obligation to imitate the example set by the prophet. To acquire the title of Hajji, bestowed on the one who has been to Mecca, insures a through passage at death to Paradise.

If the Haj is the visible bond uniting all Moslems into a single vast community, another requirement served to establish the economic basis of Mohammedanism—the *zakat* or "poor tax." In the case of the three "pillars of the faith" that we have been discussing—prayer, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and the Haj—we have illustrations of the powerful personal influence of the prophet. These duties are obligatory because of the example set by the prophet. Two of them are due to direct adaptations from Judaism and Christianity respectively, while the third is of native origin, emphasizing a distinctively Arabic phase of the religion. The *zakat* has a more complicated history. At its start it appears to have been a "charity" contribution for the support of the poor. As such it is a tribute to the prophet's humanitarian instincts, and indeed throughout the Koran there is the strongest possible emphasis upon kindness to the poor, and protection for the widow and orphan. "The poor ye will always have with you" is accepted as an axiom and it is assumed that every follower of Mohammed is charitably inclined. "Prayer," a caliph is made to say, "carries us half-way to Allah, fasting brings us to the door of His palace, but alms-giving procures us admission."

To understand this emphasis we must take into consideration the unregulated economic conditions of the ancient East, which still exist at the present time. The poor are an element of the population in every town and village as distinct as are the traders, the workers, the

learned and the state officials. The view is not uncommon that the poor exist in order to evoke the charitable spirit of mankind. It is Allah who makes the poor and the rich. The poor man is in some respects a privileged character, since he is the cause of storing up "merit" [21] for oneself by dispensing charity, a merit of which one will reap the reward when the day of judgment comes.

The *zakat,* however, came to serve an entirely different purpose, dictated by the conditions that arose with the two-fold aspect of Islam as a religion and a state. Instead of being a voluntary contribution for the support of the poor, the *zakat* was made a legal assessment to form part of a revenue for the state—a tax imposed upon every one, which in time led to many ramifications. The *zakat* was the starting-point for the development of a community or state budget. To this day the legal fiction of the *zakat* is maintained as the basis of governmental taxes and a distinction was introduced between the *zakat* as a compulsory contribution, and *sadakat* ("charity") as voluntary alms-giving in addition to the *zakat.* This "pillar" of the faith thus furnishes an illustration of the combination of state functions with religious duties, so characteristic of the theocratic form of government which developed with the spread of political power through the conquests of the Arabs.

The combination of church and state in Islam led to other features, quite distinct from those which resulted from the same process in Christianity. Islam never developed a priesthood in any real sense. The civil and religious authority was concentrated in the caliph to an extent for which no parallel exists in the Christian states of Europe. As the Mohammedan power split up into several caliphates, in rivalry with one another, complications, to be sure, ensued which were only partially set

[21] *Zakat* conveys the idea of "merit"; as does the corresponding word in Hebrew, *zekuth.*

aside by the establishment of the Turkish Empire in control of the entire Mohammedan world. In theory, however, the Sultan is the head of the church as well as of the state. Opposition to that authority is based on its supposed illegitimacy, for neither the Shiites nor a great body of those who follow Sunna were ever reconciled to recognizing the Sultan of Turkey as the real successor of Mohammed. That opposition grew in strength as the Turkish Empire began to crumble, until to-day only a small proportion of the Mohammedan world feels bound to follow the authority of the Sultan, even when he calls the faithful to enter upon a *jihad*—a crusade for the preservation of the faith. As a concession to the religious supremacy of Islam, the Sultan nominally recognizes the authority of an official known as the Sheikh el-Islam, "the Chief of Islam," who enforces the decisions of the Turkish state by an endorsement in the name of the religion. Naturally such a "chief," resident in Constantinople, is merely a creature of the state, so that his authority is largely nominal. The revolt of Arabia since the outbreak of the war [22] is merely the last of various attempts to reëstablish a central form of theocratic government with the religious factor as the dominating one.

A union, however, of Mohammedans that should be at once political and religious is a hopeless task, as hopeless as any such union in Christendom. Even under the dominion of orthodoxy such unions were condemned to failure. The rise of Protestantism marked the failure in the greatest attempt at such a combination that had ever been made. Catholicism came nearer to success, because of its efficient organization and because of the powerful aid given by a strong priesthood. But even Catholicism could not prevent a split between Eastern and Western Christianity. With the growing strength of

[22] See Snouck Hurgronje's account, *The Revolt in Arabia*. English translation by Prof. Richard Gottheil, New York, 1916.

national consciousness in the states of Western Europe, its power even over Western Christianity steadily declined until the final break between Church and State came, inaugurated by the Protestant Reformation. As indicated, the process proceeded along different lines in Islam, but the issue was identical. The Mohammedan state projected by Mohammed was doomed to failure, but the religion founded by him will survive this failure, as Christianity survived the separation of Church and State, which, with the growing force of democracy in government, becomes an absolute divorce.

At present, with the infusion of Western ideas and strong Western influences into Mohammedan lands, Islam may be said to be on trial, even in a more decided sense than Christianity, which is feeling the force of the new currents of thought, brought on by the discoveries in the realm of the natural sciences. Will Islam be able to adapt itself after its long intellectual isolation from outside currents to the new conditions demanded by the inevitable changes, superinduced by modern thought, modern modes of life and modern political drift?

The strength of Islam has always consisted in the simplicity of its doctrines, despite the elaborate theological systems constructed in the course of centuries around these doctrines. The first "pillar of faith," [23] the proclamation of the unity of Allah, emphasizing the thought of unity in the phenomena of the universe, is not difficult to grasp in its Islamic form, which leaves room, as we have seen, for the persistent popular beliefs in good and evil demons that alternately aid and check the efforts of man. The ritual, except for the obligation of prayer five times daily, is not burdensome. Life hitherto in the East has not been over-strenuous. Time is a cheap commodity,

[23] The five "pillars," as above set forth, are usually enumerated as follows: (1) *Shahâda*, the witness to the faith in the unity of Allah; (2) *Salat*, prayer; (3) *Zakat*, the poor-tax; (4) *Saum*, fasting during Ramadan; and (5) the *Haj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

and to turn aside from one's toil for a brief prayer service which may be performed anywhere is not as onerous as it would be in our over-busy Western world. Besides, the obligation has never been strictly observed by the great masses. The pilgrimage to Mecca is a wonderful excursion—a great experience in one's life; and a religion that thus imposes travel as an obligation need have no fear of diminishing the attachment to it. The fasting in Ramadan is a burden, though cheerfully borne, as is the *zakat* because of the assurance of reward for the "merit" thus acquired. Taking over from Jews and Christians the doctrine of enjoyment of a perpetual Paradise for the pious, Mohammed improved upon the models by painting the joys of eternal bliss in colors specially adapted to lure the untutored nomads, living in a land where the dearth of water entails hardships and where life suffers from its monotony. To look forward to life in a garden where luscious fruits are to be had for the picking, where water flows in abundance and where black-eyed damsels are ready to serve and to attend to all one's needs, was calculated to make a strong appeal to others as well as to the nomad, by its contrast to agriculture, with its relatively hard conditions of life. In the Biblical description of primeval Paradise, on which the picture of the joys in store after death for those who have lived a life according to the dictates of religion is based, there is the same contrast between the ideal state of the gardener who has merely to stretch forth his hand to obtain his food, lying under the shadow of trees on the banks of cooling rivers, as against the agriculturist who cultivates the soil in the sweat of his brow.

The ethics of Islam are simple. Fair dealings with one's neighbors and kindness towards animals may be said to sum up the chief virtues, though they must be supplemented by the performance of the religious duties and the obligation to have one's children instructed in the

teachings of Islam. Abstinence from strong drink, emphasized by Mohammed in connection with his general opposition towards the luxuries that accompany a higher culture,[24] made for simple habits of life and encouraged a self-restraint that acted wholesomely in other respects. Though on the whole an austere religion, Islam did not discourage the cultivation of the fine arts,[25] though with a restriction against the reproduction of the human figure. It directly promoted literature, with the exclusion, to be sure, of the drama, and furthered science, more particularly medicine and mathematics, by the side of historiography, geography and jurisprudence, bound up, however, with the theological legalism. Nor should we forget our debt to the Mohammedan theologians and thinkers who transmitted the teachings of Aristotle, albeit that they gave to his speculations a Mohammedan garb.

Up to the present the indications are that Mohammedanism can absorb Western influences to a certain extent without either losing its character or its hold on the masses. The impression one receives on a visit to Egypt where contact with the West is direct is that merely the surface of Islam has been touched by the infusion of Western modes of life. The old incrustated culture of the East, so indissolubly bound up with Islam, stands proof against attacks, at least to the extent of preserving all its essential features.

Just here is the crux of the problem. Islam is more than a religion—it is a distinct form of civilization, just as Christianity is part and parcel of European and American civilization, and as Buddhism is bound up with the

[24] Viniculture encounters opposition in the Old Testament as against agriculture, which is the ideal state—to be preferred to commerce and city life. See a paper by the writer, "Wine in the Pentateuchal Codes," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 33: 180–192.

[25] On Mohammedan art in its various ramifications, see the magnificent work of Sarre and Martin, *Muhammedanische Kunst* (3 vols., Munich, 1912).

Hindu attitude towards life. In a contact between two civilizations as distinct from one another as the Islamic East and the Christian West there seems to be no possibility of a mutual approach. Certainly, one may question whether missionary efforts, however praiseworthy and however zealously and skilfully conducted, will ever bring about such an approach—perhaps in part for the reason that on the purely religious and ethical side Islam has so much in common with Christianity, though differing, to be sure, in some essentials. Professor Snouck Hurgronje,[26] indeed, looks hopefully towards the future. He believes that an understanding between Islam and the modern world (which is the Western world) is possible, though he does not tell us what this understanding will be. He resents the implication of Kipling's poetical despair,

> East is East, and West is West,
> And never the twain shall meet,

and regards it as "almost a blasphemy" so far as the Moslem world, which he knows so well, is concerned. And yet one cannot see how Islamic (which is Oriental) culture can yield to Western influences beyond a certain limit without entering upon a distintegrating process.

This from many points of view would be regrettable. After all, are we not in danger of over-emphasizing the value of unity which may lead to a dull uniformity? Our aim should rather be a unity of *ideals,* while recognizing that there are various paths leading to these ideals. Mohammedan culture, tied to Islamic beliefs, is one of these paths, mapped out by the course of history in Eastern lands. The failure of Islam to find a footing in Western Europe or in this country is a significant indication of its limitation, while responding instinctively to the Eastern outlook on life. Looking on Islam as an expression of the Eastern mood, it seems safe to pre-

[26] *Mohammedanism,* p. 177.

dict that it will disappear only with the eclipse of the civilization of which it forms an integral part. One may conceive of a complete conquest of the East by the West without a disappearance of Eastern civilization or the extinction of the Oriental spirit—so totally different from its Occidental counterpart.

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# CHAPTER X

## THE RELIGION OF GREECE

BY WALTER WOODBURN HYDE

In this chapter it is my task to treat the first of the historical religions which grew up on European soil—that of the Greeks. In many fundamentals of its developed form it differed from the religions already treated, although it was profoundly influenced throughout its history by the religious ideas of the near Orient, especially Egypt. The record is a long and varied one, for Greek religion continued on the higher plane of anthropomorphic polytheism for a period of at least two thousand years, back of which stretched long ages of a pre-anthropomorphic past. During its whole evolution it was quite unchecked by any tradition of revelation or by sacerdotal dogma. It adapted itself easily to all the changes in the social, political and intellectual history of the most gifted of peoples, continually assimilating new and foreign ideas, and in its later periods it was profoundly influenced by the greatest poets, philosophers and artists. It was, in fact, part and parcel of Greek civilization and outlook on life and it shows the same mobility, the same love of freedom and capability of progress which we see in all phases of Greek culture,—characteristics in general absent from the Oriental religions, which tended to crystallize early into fixed and dogmatic types.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

At the outset, before entering upon a historical account of this religion, I will indicate a few of these characteristics of the developed form which it assumed in the Classical period of Greece. The first thing to strike us

is the absence of many ideas common to most of the Eastern religions. Whereas these generally emphasized certain dogmas, Greek religion was primarily a matter not of belief at all, but of practice. The Greeks had no dogmas, no creeds, no sacred writings. Their religion had no founder and never felt the need of a reformer. They had no idea of any revelation of the divine will to men except in particular instances, and their religion never pretended to judge the lives of men from an ethical standpoint; it acted far more as a stimulus than as a restraint to their consciences. It left little room, therefore, for a Hebrew prophet or an inspired preacher or teacher. The Greek gods were not looked upon as holy nor omnipotent; they were removed but a little way in character and power from mortals. The idea of deifying living men, which assumed such proportions in the later centuries, was itself an evidence of the almost human character of these gods. The idea that the gods cared for men was a late conception. There were, to be sure, certain hymns to the gods, like the so-called Homeric Hymns, and there were prayer formulæ for special occasions, like the rain-prayer of the Athenians, along with elaborate rituals at various shrines for certain festivals and expiations for public and private use. Perhaps certain views of the Godhead and versions of legends about the gods and heroes might enjoy exceptional authority, such as would justify their being called, in a very qualified sense, orthodox. But even if, in this sense, Homer and Hesiod were representative of Greek orthodoxy, their poems never formed a Bible; nothing was systematized nor compiled in writing even for a single state; the priesthood was never hereditary, as were those of the Brahmans and Egyptians, and, furthermore, the priests never had any office of instruction or exhortation.

This absence of a founder, sacred writings and uniform priesthood resulted in the extreme freedom of Greek

religion. This was merely a reflection of Greek political freedom. The contrast between the physical features of the Balkan peninsula, in which Hellenic civilization evolved, and those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, has often been made. Whereas the valleys of the Nile and Euphrates, unbroken by natural boundaries and enjoying the same climate and products, were predestined by their configuration to become not only cradles of culture, but early to be united into powerful states, which developed a uniformity of culture largely excluding change, Greece, on the other hand, broken up into valleys by intersecting ranges of hills and surrounded on three sides by the sea, whose gulfs and bays penetrated far into the land and made natural ways of communication, was predestined to just the opposite—variety of climate, products and occupations, and consequently had a different history. The City-State grew up to live its own life in its own surroundings. This political particularism was nowhere better reflected than in Greek religion. As each City-State had its own constitution, just so it had its own worship and cycle of gods. As there was no political centralization, no national state until the latest days, there was no national religion. Instead there was a great diversity of cults in various towns and the only authority in religious matters was the local shrine tradition. To be sure, a community of beliefs and practices among neighboring states might at times result in larger units, religious confederacies or amphictyonies around a common shrine. A few such shrines, like those of Apollo at Delphi and Zeus at Dodona, might in course of time become recognized by all Greeks and vitally influence their religious and moral ideas. Such unions were always exceptional and seldom made for much unity of ideas or conformity in externals. Everything in Greece—physical conditions, differences in blood, in dialect, in culture—tended to produce variety and idiosyncrasy in states and individuals

and these were all reflected in religion. However, I must add that amid all this local variation there was a certain uniformity of religious psychology which unconsciously tended toward similar beliefs and practices, and, consequently, in a summary account of Greek religion, we can loosely speak as if there were a uniform system more or less true of all Greece, even if it does not apply in detail to any one state. As a whole, then, the religion of the Greeks had a physiognomy of its own, very different on the one hand from that of the Vedic Hindus, or that of the Romans on the other.

Another characteristic was the marked tendency in Greece to subordinate the priest to the civil magistrate. Priests were appointed as state officials; temples were built and maintained by state moneys and religious law was administered by state courts. Thus the priests, chosen by lot or elected for a time by the community, were in no sense the final authority in religious matters; they merely carried out the vote of the assembly under the direction of the magistrates, so that religious authority was really vested in the people and no Greek City-State ever became theocratic. The priests were in no sense teachers, but were bound only to maintain and perform the traditional ritual service at the altar they served. This shrine ritual was the result of centuries of evolution, constantly changing as it passed from generation to generation, ever tending toward unity of belief in the worshipers, but never compelling it. It could not stand for long in the way of secular advance nor moral progress. On the contrary, speculation and progress were looked upon as divine attributes. As Farnell says: "The religion of Hellas penetrated the whole life of the people, but rather as a servant than as a master." Apart from the public worship there were many mystic cults where newer and more advanced ideas might be taught, thus breaking the barriers of tribal and civic cults. Consequently every Greek

had great latitude in his beliefs. We may infer from a remark of the Platonic Socrates that the Athenians in general cared little what a man believed so long as he did not proselyte. Aristophanes could ridicule and Euripides could doubt the popular beliefs; but no one could openly proclaim disbelief in the existence of the gods or refuse to join in the public worship. As religious beliefs were never settled, there was no danger of a Greek being cast out of the synagogue or the priesthood for holding views different from those of other people. He merely had to refrain from publicly preaching doctrines which might be construed as interfering with the orders of the State. Religious persecution, then, occupies little space in the story of the Greeks. Before Alexander's time it was dangerous to introduce foreign cults into Greece, not only because they were at variance with the recognized State worship, but also because their orgiastic spirit was repellent to Greek taste. Anaxagoras, the philosopher, was tried for doubting the gods and Protagoras, the sophist, was banished, and, worst of all, Socrates was put to death on the ground of ridiculing them. However, these were all exceptional cases and none of them can be shown to have been wholly inspired by religious feelings. The slaying of Socrates was unique and, whatever may be said, was a stain on the history of Athens, entirely out of place in a city so vaunting of its freedom. To us Socrates seems a noble character, the greatest glory of the city which saw fit to kill him. Dogmatic intolerance, however, had little to do with this crime, which appears to have been mainly political. He was not a thorough-going democrat and did not believe in the "bean"; anything savoring of oligarchy in 399 B.C., only a few years after the expulsion of the Thirty Tyrants, was odious and this doubtless aroused the suspicions of his judges. But the immediate cause of so strange a verdict may be found rather in the circumstances of his trial—the independent bearing

of the old man, his flat refusal to change his mode of life, his contempt of resorting to the usual appeals to pity, and, above all, the insolence of his counter penalty—to be kept for the rest of his life at the Prytaneum at the public expense as the honored guest and benefactor of Athens,—in short, his careless, defiant attitude, which fanned into flame the old embers of political distrust.

In the Classical period the chief thing to impress the worshiper was the pomp and ceremony of the public worship—the beautiful temples, the artistic cult statues, the stately processions and the solemn ritual. In all this we see the characteristics of a people endowed beyond all others with a sense of the beautiful and a capacity to enjoy life, who worshiped gods in whom they saw their own ideals. Consider the glorious frieze of the Parthenon and imagine how in the days of Pericles the great Panathenaic procession, the most brilliant worship with which Athena was honored at Athens, moved in stately wise from the lower city up through the Propylæa to the Acropolis and then along both sides of this most beautiful of all Greek temples to its eastern front. Such a procession, leading beasts for sacrifice and carrying the sacred robe of the virgin goddess, which had been woven by chosen matrons and maidens, was representative of all that was noblest in Athenian worship. Archons and lesser magistrates, bands of men and youths chosen for their beauty, maidens of the noblest families carrying sacrificial vessels and implements, representatives of allied and tributary states, resident aliens, musicians and attendants—all took part, escorted by chariots and knights with military pomp. In their midst, at the sacrifice and offering of the robe, sat the invisible gods in assembly, the guests of Athena. No god was ever worshiped more gloriously than by this galaxy of beautiful forms moving along with its wealth of color in the luminous atmosphere of the city of the

violet crown amid the immortal monuments of those mortal men.

Beauty was not the only feature of Greek worship, for joyousness was also there. Religion rested lightly on the shoulders of the Greek. He was not oppressed by any deep sense of sin; he thought well of himself and not too well of his gods. If he only avoided the graver offenses against morality and especially the *amour propre* of his gods, he had little to fear. The ever-recurring festivals, celebrated with music and processions, accompanied by theatrical, gymnastic or orchestral competitions, were real holidays. Even if the opening days of some of these festivals, like the Spartan *Hyacinthia,* were sad, they generally ended with feasting and dancing. Sacrifices and prayers were intended not so much for expiation as for asking and acknowledging blessings received from the gods. When in sickness or danger the Greek made his vows, and on recovery or escape he religiously paid them. Plato tells us he prayed morning and evening and concluded every meal with hymn and prayer; but of course such devotions would become as perfunctory to the Greeks as our table blessings have become to us.

The Greek, then, delighted in the beautiful and joyous side of worship, but we must not fall into the mistake of concluding that his religion was all beauty and joy, just because that side of it meets us most often in his literature and art. As sunlight cannot exist without shadow, Greek worship also had a darker side. Calamities would come upon individuals and states and these would be laid at the door of malignant or offended deities. Great criminals were followed then as now by the avenging furies of conscience. There was also much in Greek religion that was repulsive and ugly. Many lower forms were retained, even if moribund, to the latest times side by side with higher ones. These cannot be ascribed to Oriental origin, for nothing is more Greek than some of the grossest of

them. Nor is it reasonable to class as foreign everything in Greek civilization which clashes with our ideal of the Greeks. Greek mythology contained many repulsive elements, which were constantly denounced by ancient writers like Pindar, Euripides and Plato. Many of these beliefs must have had a deleterious effect on morality. The forms of worship and the sacred formulæ were, however, in the main pure and refined. There was never any orgiastic spirit in Greek religion. There was no sexual defilement in the early temples, no licentiousness in the "sacred marriage" at Eleusis or elsewhere, even if the Church Fathers insinuated it. There is little evidence to show that the worship of Aphrodite was, generally speaking, any less decorous than that of other goddesses. Her statues were draped down to the time of Praxiteles and the Hellenistic sculptures which realistically portray the physical charms of the Phrynes of the time are no more concerned with the real religion of the Greeks than the fleshy voluptuous Magdalenes of Rubens are with Christianity. We hear much of sanctified prostitution in her honor, but it was mostly late and confined to a few temples, as those of Cyprus and Eryx, Cythera and Corinth. Phallic ritual was rare and for the most part confined to vegetation cults and the philosophical literature of Greece made little protest against it. In short, if Greek religion had a dark side, it was never prominent.

Great artists, thinkers and poets found deep meaning in the popular worship. Such minds as Æschylus, Sophocles, Socrates and Plato were deeply religious and found both truth and comfort in the people's faith. Aristotle said the name "father" applied to Zeus included the idea of his loving care of men. St. Paul (Acts 18: 28) quoted a late Greek poet, Aratus, to the effect that "we are his offspring." The Stoic Cleanthes, in his beautiful hymn, says much the same words—even if he meant thereby that human reason was a fragment of the divine.

The humanness of the gods and the divineness of men were never more clearly felt than by the Greeks. While the Hebrew taught that man was made in God's image, the Greek made his gods in the image of men. Where men are mortal gods, the gods are merely immortal men.

With all the freedom and formalism of Greek worship, the question has often been raised as to whether the Greeks were really religious. If religion consists in a belief in a power or powers higher than men; if it is a longing for protection and sympathy from them, and if prayer and sacrifice and the wish to propitiate them are religious acts, the Greeks were truly religious. The material of religion in its two departments of theology and ritual was much the same in Greece as elsewhere—sacrifice and offering, prayer and hymn, propitiation and thanksgiving, purification and expiation, magical rites, belief in ghosts and demons, ancestor and clan worship and the formation of a pantheon. These elements are the common stock of religion among all peoples of similar degrees of culture; what was characteristic of the Greeks was not the material, but the way in which it was handled. Where the Australian stopped, the Greek passed on. Every Greek town had more shrines than a modern city has churches. You remember how Paul's spirit was provoked within him as he beheld Athens full of idols and found the Athenians "somewhat superstitious" (Acts 16:16, 23). He came upon altars not only to many gods but to an "Unknown God" erected in Athens as elsewhere to correct any possible omission. The Greek calendar was at first invented merely to determine the festivals. Greek religious imagination was continually tending to become the impulse to two other forms of activity—art, both literary and plastic, and philosophy. Greek art was always the handmaid of religion and would have satisfied even Tolstoy's definition. Greek literature was saturated with religion. The drama was religious

in origin and development. Greek philosophy was always theological in character. Greek law was religious in its origin and development. Even the athletic games were religious in origin and spirit, always associated with the worship of gods and heroes, and were among the strongest Pan-Hellenic influences, making not only for nationality, but also for a broader religion than that of tribe or city.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF GREEK RELIGION

The scientific study of Greek religion as distinct from mythology is very recent; it may almost be said to be the work of the last generation of scholars. Only through the recent development of anthropology and comparative religion has it become possible finally to classify it in the world's creeds and appreciate its importance for the history of culture. It seems strange that the religions of India and China—to say nothing of those of savage races—should have been studied so long to the almost total neglect of the religions of Greece and Rome. Even yet, most people, to whom the superiority of Greek poetry, philosophy and art is an axiom, doubt whether the study of Greek religion is really worth while. Through its association with a romantic, though not always edifying mythology, it has been looked upon as an inferior product of the gifted Greeks. Yet we know now that it has the same beauty and imagination which we have long recognized in other phases of Greek civilization and that the Hellenic spirit shows itself here quite as worthily as elsewhere. Apart from any such general consideration, there are also very definite reasons why we should study the religion of the Greeks. The student of religious origins finds in it material which, for variety and detail, has no equal in any other religion. The student of history finds that in this phase of her culture, as in all others, Greece began at the beginning and struggled

slowly upwards to the mountain tops. During its long course over centuries Greek religion never suffered from any internal revolution so that the deposits of earlier ages were never entirely obliterated, but to the last these imprints of the successive periods of culture through which the Hellenic race passed were preserved; thus their religion reveals to us more clearly than anything else the evolution of the Greeks from savagery. As Gilbert Murray says: "There is hardly any horror of primitive superstition of which we cannot find some distant trace in our Greek record. There is hardly any height of spiritual thought attained in the world that has not its archetype or its echo in the stretch of Greek literature that lies between Thales and St. Paul." [1]

Lastly, we must not forget that the potency of this religion did not end with the greatness of Greece, but continued on into later Europe. It was not blotted out by Christianity. On the contrary, whatever real power it had, passed over into the ideas and forms of our own religion to such an extent that one could maintain that Greek religion has exercised indirectly as much influence on the various phases of modern religious life as mythology has on modern literatures. The influence of the religion of Greece on Christianity is too complex a subject to be more than hinted at in this connection. That ancient rites should have persisted in the Eastern Church under the cover of the new religion, and that ancient gods and heroes should reappear as saints, is not so surprising when we reflect on the summary way in which Constantine established the new faith. It was not difficult to convert the Parthenon into a Christian church, when the virgin goddess of wisdom was supplanted first by St. Sophia and later by Mary. Similarly, it was easy to replace Apollo by St. George and Poseidon by St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors. Nor should we be surprised when we

[1] *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, 1912, p. 16.

see an old Greek rite celebrated now by a Greek priest. The influence of Greek theology and philosophy on Christian belief can be directly traced in the changes wrought in the concept of Christianity, when it had to be cast into a new mould to meet the changed atmosphere from Palestine to Europe. Though the influence of the old ritual on the plastic ritual of the early church cannot be traced so easily, it may be said in general that the simplicity of the primitive Christian sacrament gradually had given way by the fifth century to the richly developed ritual of the church, which was only an evolution of ancient Greek rites.

Miss Harrison has shown why this study has been neglected until these later years. In the first place it was not studied as a whole but in only one phase—mythology. As Greek myths were necessary to an understanding of Greek literature, the confusion between mythology and religion was fatal to a proper appreciation of the latter. As every reader of the classics learned about the Greek gods through the myths, it was easy to think that mythology and religion were identical, though, as a matter of fact, there is little connection between them. Myths, however beautiful, can hardly have inspired religious sentiments. Sometimes they reflect the ritual and again they were invented to explain it and thus contain important cult ideas. But in general Greek myths were utterly irresponsible; poets could select or change them at will to suit their immediate purpose. Thus in the Iliad the Apollo of Book I, worshiped by Chryses, and the Apollo of Book XVI, who wounds Patroclus from behind on the field of battle, have little in common. Myths frequently fell below the level of the current worship which was always free of the impurities which we see in the former. Again, the mythology which was studied by classical students was looked upon as ancillary to literature and not to religion. Moreover, it was distorted by

Alexandrine and Roman literature. It is not so long ago that scholars called the Greek gods by Latin names, and the mistake still keeps up among lovers of classical literature. We now know that even if Zeus and Jupiter, Athena and Minerva, were akin, they were not identical. Scholars have by now largely corrected the nomenclature, but we are still prone to give Alexandrine or Roman natures to the Greek gods, making them the ornamental gods of an artificial literature. We no longer call Eros Cupid, but we do think of him as a naughty little cherub with bow and arrows, just as the Alexandrine poets and Ovid conceived him. Such an idea would surely have astonished the worshipers of his own city of Thespiæ, where his most ancient image was an unwrought stone. We now know also that Dionysus was not a beautiful god of wine, but an ancient tree-spirit once worshiped as a pillar, and that the Sirens, instead of being bewitching mermaids, were curious bird-demons with women's heads.

### RECENT ACCESSIONS TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GREEK RELIGION

A change has come. The religions of Greece and Rome are now scientifically studied and are no longer looked upon as identical, but almost as different as any two religions can be. Greek religion is no longer studied for the purposes of mythology only, but as an important factor in the spiritual history of the race, an integral part of Greek civilization. However, it does not owe everything to a reform in the methods of study, but also to recent accessions of material through archæological investigations. Instead of now going to Alexandrine or Roman literature to learn about the Greek gods, we supplement the knowledge we gain from the Greek writers by a study of every particle of evidence unearthed by the spade—vase paintings, wall paintings, statues, bronzes, terra-cottas, cult objects, inscriptions. Especially have

the earlier periods of Greek religion been enriched by excavations on prehistoric sites. The revelation of a pre-Hellenic culture in the Ægean area, due, in the first instance, to the discoveries of Schliemann beginning in the seventies at Troy, Tiryns, Mycenæ and elsewhere and culminating in those of Evans and others carried on since 1900 on the island of Crete, has revolutionized our knowledge of prehistoric Greece and added new and striking chapters not only to Greek history but to Greek religion. We can no longer call the Greeks young in comparison with the Oriental peoples, nor can we any longer indulge our fancy into believing that Greek civilization was a thing unexampled in history, rising almost at a bound out of nothing to its heights of splendor, as the walls of Ilium were fabled to have risen beneath the hands of their divine builders, for we now know that obscure millennia preceded its supposedly sudden bloom. The recent discoveries in Crete have profoundly changed all our ideas of the antiquity of the earliest European culture. Not even have the remarkable discoveries of the last generation made in Egypt and in Mesopotamia revealed to us a world so new and unexpected as that disclosed to us in the palaces of Crete. To classical students of twenty years ago Crete was hardly more than a land of legendary heroes. Many stories told us of Cnossus, of Minos's realm, of his Labyrinth and its strange prisoner the Minotaur, of Theseus and Ariadne, of Dædalus and Icarus, the first aeronauts. Historians, like Grote, had looked upon the period between these legends and the historical age as a great gulf of darkness behind which we could never hope to go. Greek history began with the first Olympiad; even the return of the Heraclidæ and the Dorian invasion were looked upon as chiefly fanciful. Homer's poems were read because of their transcendent poetic value, but the scenes which he describes were supposed to be imaginary projections on the

past of his own age, behind which lay the wasteland of legend. When, in 1878, Schliemann discovered the tombs of Mycenæ he naïvely imagined that he had found the actual skeletons of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra and beheld their features in the gold-foil death masks found with them, and that he had recovered the very cup out of which Nestor had drunk, the pigeons still intact on the handles. This arouses our humor now, for we know that these were the tombs of the first kings of Mycenæ, who, perhaps, had come from Crete long before when the town was built. But the historicity of the golden court of the Atridæ cannot be disposed of so easily. Walter Leaf, in his very recent book on Homer, finds it reasonable to look upon the Homeric heroes as historical characters instead of "faded gods," and believes it quite possible that the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles, as staged in the Iliad, was an actual incident which took place in the Achæan camp and that it may have seriously affected the campaign against Ilium.[1a]

Though Schliemann's discoveries produced in his day more wonder than scientific results, we now know that he proved the existence of a civilization which was the original of Homer's descriptions, though far older, for the divine poet sang of a golden past. It was not, however, until Evans and Halbherr, followed by scholars of England, Italy and America, had unearthed the palaces of the sea-kings of Crete, that we discovered that we—with more daring than the fabled Icarus—had flown right over the heads, not only of the historical Greeks, but of Homer's heroes as well, for we learned that this Ægean culture must have antedated by many centuries the building of the walls and galleries of Tiryns. We then learned that the period which Schliemann had called Mycenæan—the term applied to the palaces, houses, tombs, pottery, weapons, gems and ornaments which,

[1a] *Homer and History*, 1915, p. 29.

wherever found, exhibit a more or less striking similarity to those laid bare on the citadel of Mycenæ—was merely the decadence of a far richer culture whose centre was Crete, and that behind Homer's pictures were centuries of development of which neither he nor the historical Greeks had any inkling. We now know that this Ægean civilization, properly so-called, extended over Crete, Southern Greece and the isles of the Ægean, while another, proven by its pottery to be different, grew up subsidiary to or parallel with it in Central and Northern Greece, at Troy and on the island of Cyprus. In the Late Bronze Age—corresponding to the "Great Palace" period at Cnossus and the succeeding Mycenæan period of the mainland, and contemporary with the XVIII and XIX Egyptian dynasties (c. 1600–1200 B.C.)—the Ægean civilization, radiating from Crete, influenced this other independent culture at Troy, in the sixth of the nine buried cities on the hill at Hissarlik, and replaced or overlaid it in Thessaly and Cyprus. The Ægean culture, though borrowing much from Egypt and probably from the Hittite peoples of Asia Minor, was an indigenous one, evolved among the primitive dark-skinned peoples who inhabited the whole eastern basin of the Mediterranean for countless centuries before Homer's fair-skinned Achæans wrested the sovereignty from their degenerate descendants. A brief account, therefore, of the Ægean religious ideas and practices, as we learn of them especially in Crete, forms a necessary preface to the early religion of the same Mediterranean stock, which grew up more or less independently on the mainland of Greece, where it formed the substratum of the historical Greek religion. The problems of this Minoan-Mycenæan religion are not yet ready for final settlement, but we can draw certain definite conclusions from the evidence so far accumulated. We can understand something of the ritual of those early days and something of the deities to whom

it was addressed; but until the script, now lying unread on the tablets from the Cretan palaces, shall have found its Champollion, we shall know little of its theology.

### THE PREHISTORIC ÆGEAN RELIGION

One of the chief characteristics of this Mediterranean cult is the fact that palace and temple were not yet differentiated. Sacred caves and gorges were venerated as the dwelling of deity, but the only religious structures discovered are a small chapel in the palace at Cnossus and miniature shrines for domestic worship. But the religious element in the frescoes which decorated the palace walls tells us that a large part of the building was devoted to cult purposes and has led Sir Arthur Evans to believe, on the analogy of the priest-king in the characteristic Anatolian cult of Cybele, that the king was at the same time the high-priest.

It is certain that the Minoans had arrived at the stage of theism in very early days and their religion appears to have been from the beginning a nature cult. They embodied their chief concept of deity in feminine form, a sort of Great Mother, whom the later Greeks identified with Rhea. Most scholars, following the lead of Evans and Hogarth, have interpreted this deity as a nature goddess, whose care, like that of Browning's Artemis, embraced all creatures of land and sea during their earthly existence, and later became their ruler in the underworld. For representations of her on clay impressions of intaglio gems from both Crete and Mycenæ show her crowned with doves, the emblems of heaven, while primitive, rude terra-cotta idols from Gournia and Prinias, and the group of two polychrome faience figurines of advanced art, discovered at Cnossus in 1903, show her with snakes, the usual emblems of the underworld powers. In these statuettes, which probably were the furniture of a royal household shrine of the end of the Middle Minoan period

(c. 1800–1600 B.C.), and which are among the most remarkable that archæology has recovered from the prehistoric Ægean culture, the Minoan artist, by delicate modelling and use of color, has represented the goddess in the characteristic Cretan fashion, with tight bodice, low neck, short sleeves and well-shaped, full-flounced skirt. She holds at arms' length writhing, twisted snakes; a spotted serpent curls round the high headdress of one figure, while a spotted cat is seated above a wreath on the head of the other. In general, the Cretan deity appears in beneficent guise; but sometimes she has a more fearful aspect, as on a certain seal impression from Cnossus, where she is represented as standing on a cairn of stones with hair dishevelled and fierce gaze, accompanied by rampant lionesses. It has generally been assumed that when the later Greeks found this divinity in possession of the island, they identified her, in the various aspects of her many-sided nature, with various deities of their pantheon—not only with Rhea, the mother of the gods, who fled to Crete to bear her son Zeus, but with Artemis as "Lady of the Wilds," with Aphrodite and her doves, with Hera, Demeter, Athena and others. Perhaps a more rational interpretation is the recent one of H. R. Hall, who believes that the various forms under which she is depicted in art are really different deities of a Cretan pantheon, and that even if these forms are to be explained as those of one goddess, they were popularly regarded as distinct divinities.[2]

This mother-goddess was associated with a satellite male god, who is represented on gems and frescoes as an armed youth with spear and shield. No idol of this god, who was evidently the only male deity worshiped by the Minoans, has been found. When the Cretans went north, the Hellenic Zeus best corresponded to this god, and when the Achæan and Dorians came to Crete, this native war-

[2] *Ægean Archæology*, 1915, pp. 149 ff.

rior god Velchanos, as the only representative of the male godhead, was easily identified with their Zeus. It is not difficult for us to distinguish between the Aryan Zeus of the Greeks, the Father-God ruling from Olympus, and this Mediterranean Zeus of Crete. The legend of the youth of Velchanos—how he was suckled in the Dictæan cave by the goat Amalthea, while the Kouretes danced around his cradle and lulled him to sleep with martial clash of spear and shield, and how he was brought up by Rhea on Mount Ida—was easily appropriated by the Olympian Zeus, while many others, like the un-Greek legend of his death, were preserved by his Minoan counterpart. One can also see something of Apollo in Velchanos, which harmonizes with the tradition that the oracle and worship of Apollo at Delphi came from Crete.

We know something of the ritual of this early cult. Scenes representing worshipers or priestesses in various attitudes of adoration, pouring libations, sacrificing and playing upon musical instruments, are common. Though images of the mother-goddess were known apparently from the earliest times—as idols of steatite just suggesting the human form have been found in the neolithic deposits at Cnossus—the chief cult objects were taken from the natural world, especially stones, trees and pillars, the fetish forms of the original divine mountain—the cone-shaped Mount Iuktas, south of Cnossus, which seems to have been sacred from the beginning, and which in course of time gave birth both in Crete and on the mainland of Greece to altars and statues. Sacred pillars with nothing to uphold are common objects of worship to the end of Minoan times.

Intimately associated with the Ægean deities was the national emblem known as the "Double Axe," which appears everywhere as a hieroglyph on altars and pillars, while great quantities of bronze axes, full-sized and miniature, were found in the cave of Dicté, the legendary

birthplace of the Cretan Zeus. Thus it is carved thirty times on two small pillars of one room of the palace at Phæstos, and in a small chapel at Cnossus it was found between the bull "horns of consecration." A complete scene of worship, in which a sacrifice is taking place before the "Double Axe," is seen on a late painted sarcophagus from Hagia Triada, and it appears as the central object of a cult scene on a painted clay coffin from Palæcastro. This emblem has generally been looked upon as the fetish form of the associated goddess and god, who were supposed to form what Hogarth calls a "dual monotheism." Though evidence of its cult use is overwhelming, it also appears where no religious significance can be proven. Perhaps at first the axe was merely a tool or weapon typifying human strength; later, by an easy transition, it came to typify divine power. Plutarch says the "Double Axe" was a royal emblem of Lydia down to the seventh century B.C. Apart from its religious connection in Minoan art, therefore, it may also be the blazon of royalty. Its native name, *labrys,* was the special emblem of the Carian Zeus at Labrandea, a fact which may point to its having been in Crete the emblem of the god and not of the goddess. It may be the original of the Latin *labarum,* the Roman military standard upon which Constantine in 312 A.D. placed the cross and which he carried before his armies. Already on philological grounds it had been suggested that the Greek word *Labyrinthos* was derived from *labrys.* The discovery that the great foundation at Cnossus was both a palace and a sanctuary of the "Double Axe" seems to confirm this view, and we may now recognize in this huge building, which covers four acres of ground and contains vast mazes of rooms, baths, winding corridors and subterranean passages, all grouped around open courts, the famous Labyrinth of Greek tradition.

Among other sacred objects discovered was a marble cross of equal limbs found in a repository of the Great

Palace at Cnossus, which Dr. Evans believes may have been the central object of worship in the Cretan cult. This discovery shows that a cross of orthodox Greek form was an object of worship centuries before Christianity. It may also help to explain why the Greek Church has always preferred this to the Latin form of the cross. Similarly the Svastika, the common emblem sculptured on Buddhist monuments of India and China and known in prehistoric Europe, was discovered in great numbers by Schliemann at Troy and elsewhere in Mycenæan strata. Like the cross, it never appears in classical Greece, but reappears in the Christian period in the catacombs of Rome and on funeral stelæ of Asia Minor.

The bull was the emblem of Velchanos and was the chief victim of sacrifice. Like the elephant of Siam, he was both royal and sacred; his actual horns or clay copies of them adorned altars and shrines, and almost every religious scene on gems and frescoes that has been discovered. These were doubtless fetish objects, conventional reductions of the bull's head, which, in turn, was a convention for the whole animal. Bull's blood was poured in libation from vessels fashioned in the shape of his head, and goldsmiths fashioned great heads of the animal, like the well-known silver one with a golden rosette on its forehead, found at Mycenæ. The sport of leaping over bulls, pictured in the frescoes from both Crete and South Greece, was doubtless connected with the worship of the god. Besides the bull there were many other sacred animals depicted in Minoan art—serpents, doves, lions, goats. It also pictured monsters, such as the Minotaur, griffins, sphinxes, lion-headed demons and human figures with lions' and asses' heads. Minoan religion appears to have been weird, perhaps weirder than the mysteries of Egyptian worship. On intaglios from Zakro we see an extraordinary medley of queer animals—

butterfly-winged sphinxes, stag-headed women, antlered men and other such combinations.

A larger view of the significance of this Minoan-Mycenæan religion shows that in many of its fundamentals it had its counterpart among many of the early peoples who bordered the Mediterranean. A great Nature-goddess with a subordinate youthful god companion—who was sometimes conceived as both husband and son—appears in Carthaginian Africa as Tanit and her son, in Egypt as Isis and Horus, in Phœnicia as Ashtart and Tammuz or Adonis, in Asia Minor as Cybele and Attis, and in Greece in the old legend of Rhea and Zeus. Though a virgin, she is generally looked upon as the mother, by immaculate conception, of her companion, and later by him of all gods and all life. She is the spirit of nature; her son dies and she renews herself by continued offspring. Similarly the Ægean ritual and cult are paralleled among all early nations. The indwelling of a deity in stones and trees and pillars is characteristic of an early stage of development everywhere. The Canaanite Ashtart, the female counterpart of Baal, was often adored under the symbol of a tree—the asherah or "grove" denounced in the Old Testament. The Greeks of Delphi, still in the second century A.D., poured oil each day on an unwrought stone and placed unspun wool upon it in times of festival. When Jacob, the ancestor of the Israelites, fell asleep and dreamed of a ladder between earth and heaven, with its angels ascending and descending, he set up his pillow stone "for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it" and called the place *Beth-El,* literally the House of God. A Greek legend makes Cronus swallow a sacred stone or *bætylos* in the belief that it was his son Zeus. It seems clear that this Greek word is derived from the Semitic *beth-el,* through a Phœnician form *bait-ul.* The use of weapons, like the "Double Axe," existed among the

Hittites. The bull's "horns of consecration" appear in early Hebrew ritual as the "horns of the altar." Belief in sacred animals is common to all primitive peoples and survived down into historic Greece. The serpent, as the embodiment of the powers of the underworld, was common to Egypt and Greece. Perhaps the serpents of the snake-goddesses may have had something to do with household worship, like the household snakes of later Rome. The dove is both Semitic and Christian; lionesses were Cybele's guardians; the bull was the dwelling of divinity in Egyptian Memphis and was common in early Greek cult; the goat was a sacred animal until late days in Asia Minor. Monsters, like those depicted on Minoan cult-scenes, were common in Egypt, and even in historic days in Greece a horse-headed Demeter was worshiped in Arcadia and a ram-headed Apollo in Laconia.

When we turn to an account of the development of religion on the mainland of Greece, the question arises as to what influence the Ægean religion centring in Crete exerted on it. The influence of the later periods of Crete on Greece, reflected in the Greek belief that Crete was the cradle of its law, art and religion, must have been immense. But it would be unreasonable to follow Gruppe in his belief that Crete was the main source of early Greek religion, unless we could prove at the same time that it was also the source of all other phases of Greek civilization. We must rather, therefore, look upon the early religion of the Mediterranean mainland as a more or less independent development of the same Ægean product, which grew up under different conditions in Crete. A good deal of this difference can be explained by the different social structure of Greece, with its City-State, and of Crete, with its Sea-Empire. Crete, though herself influenced for centuries by Egypt and the East, could have influenced the cult of the mainland but little before the latest period of her life, when the hegemony

was transferred from Cnossus to Mycenæ. We know that the Hellenic invaders of Greece found a dominant goddess cult similar to that of Crete in many places on the mainland—its portion of the common Ægean tradition. The American excavations at the Heræum near Argos have shown that a powerful goddess was worshiped there long before the Hellenes came. At Olympia Hera was worshiped for centuries before Zeus. At Dodona in Epirus Zeus and Dione appear to have succeeded an older pair of powers whose presence was recognized in the springs and oak forests and who were probably resorted to for omens. Wherever, then, we find in Greece a goddess cult, especially that of a virgin goddess, we are generally safe in recognizing the earlier Mediterranean tradition in antagonism to the later Aryan, which invariably gave preëminence to the male god. Thus the cults of Artemis in Attica and Arcadia, of Athena in Attica, of Hera in Samos, Argos and Olympia, were survivals of an earlier period. However, this is not a fixed phenomenon in early Greek religion, for we cannot always assume a non-Hellenic divinity where we find a dominant goddess cult. Nothing, for example, is more Aryan than the cult of Demeter at Eleusis, and we know that many Aryan religions gave prominence to an earth-goddess.

### THE PREHISTORIC RELIGION OF THE MAINLAND OF GREECE

Let us rapidly survey the early religious development of the mainland and distinguish the component factors which went to make what we historically call Greek religion. Here the evidence is not wholly archæological, as in the case of Crete, for we also have the help of philology and literature to guide us. Ethnology has proven nothing more conclusively than the fact that the race we call Greek was, like others great in history, the product of a blend of populations—conquering Aryan tribes from central Europe, the Hellenes or Eurasians

or Nordics of ethnology, settling among the indigenous stocks, the Eurafricans or Mediterraneans of whom we have been speaking. We must conclude, then, that the religion of historic Greece was likewise a product of a blend of early Indo-European or Aryan beliefs with the older cult ideas and practices of these peoples. These two sources continued interwoven all through the history of Greek religion and are discernible in the later strata of both theology and ritual. To disentangle them is the first problem for the historian of Greek religion. The problem is to find out what the tall, fair-haired, round-headed northerners found indigenous in the lands they conquered, before we can say what part of the historic religion was Aryan. It is a very difficult problem and we can do little more than distinguish lower from higher forms in the developed religion and, generally speaking, look upon the former as survivals of an earlier animistic past, rather than explain them as having grown up spontaneously in later days, when civic and social life was in an advanced stage. Most of these cruder beliefs and practices were, of course, gradually abandoned in the presence of the later, higher forms, but others were tolerated to the end of paganism. A good deal of such persistent conservatism in the Greek record must be laid to the door of nothing else than inertia. It was often easier to keep the old forms side by side with developed ones than to get rid of them.

In many ways the early animistic stage of Greek religion is characteristically Greek, while in others it is typical of a similar stage of thought everywhere. Thus we may call it the normal beginning of all religions, the raw material—to use the phrase of Gilbert Murray—out of which they are made. The German scholar Preuss has applied to it the expressive term "Urdummheit" or "Primal Stupidity." In Greece this prehistoric stage is both repulsive and attractive. We can see how crude notions

slowly were either gotten rid of or at last transformed into things of beauty.

In treating this early stage, it has been the habit until recently to look upon the poems of Homer as primitive and thus to start with the idea of gods. Whenever we speak of Greek mythology, we inevitably think of Homer's man-gods—of Zeus with his thunderbolt, father of gods and men, of Hera, his turbulent queen, of Poseidon with his trident, the lord of the sea, of Athena and her panoply of arms. Greek literature, vase paintings and sculpture are all dominated by this idea of anthropomorphism, the strongest trend in Greek religion; we, sharing the similar mistake of the classical Greeks, think of these gods as magnified humans. Homer's gods are not vague numina, as the old Roman divinities were in the main, dimly outlined, animate though scarcely personal; they are concrete individuals correlated into a hierarchy organized under a supreme god. In other words, the poets of the Iliad and Odyssey do not give us a picture of primitive religion at all, but of an advanced polytheism. If we consider how slow of growth religious ideas are, we see they must have inherited an age-long tradition of polytheism and we must, therefore, assume a long evolution which ended in humanly conceived deities. Just how these gods were evolved is a question which has been much discussed. Older critics contended, for instance, that the Aryan Sky-god, common to the Vedic Hindoos, the Greeks and the Romans, was brought into the Balkan peninsula and split up into the countless forms under which Zeus was worshiped in every hamlet. More scientific scholars, like Eduard Meyer,[3] believe the process was just the opposite, one of "condensation" rather than expansion. Thus similar gods worshiped by different groups would gradually merge into one; each cult would emphasize its own Zeus in accordance with its influence,

[3] *Geschichte des Altertums II*, 96.

but, on the other hand, the character of Zeus would be modified by the general Greek conception. The long accepted belief that the unity of Zeus was original and the variety of local Zeuses was accidental is opposed to the historical fact that the unity of the Greek people was the result of development. Probably Zeus and Poseidon and all the other gods of the later Epic were merely "composite photographs" of many earlier Zeuses and Poseidons. The Epic poets finally unified and standardized the earlier concepts and, putting an end to the primitive vagueness, created a universal Hellenic religion. It is only in this sense that we understand the statement of Herodotus that Homer and Hesiod framed the theogony of the Greeks, giving to the gods their names and powers and forms. Even if we assume that the appearance of personal gods is a very early fact in religious development, still the idea of gods dwelling far away in the sky like Homer's Olympians is by no means an easy one for primitive peoples to grasp, while the idea of their omnipotence and omnipresence simply transcends the barriers of all local religions. One of the world's greatest religions has dispensed with the idea of God altogether and yet has risen to great heights of moral and intellectual power. Such a development is, of course, exceptional, for even the most primitive peoples regularly evolve gods with "body, parts and passions"; in the higher stage of religions, even if the gods do not have the bodies of men, they are sure to have their mental attributes.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE GREEK GODS

If Homer and Hesiod, then, in no sense created the theogony of the Greeks, how did the gods originate? Herodotus tells us that a people, whom he calls Pelasgians, once inhabited Greece long before Homer and that at their sacrifices, though they called on *theoi* "gods," these

gods had neither names nor titles. This means that there was a time in Greece, as everywhere else in the Ægean area, when men of Mediterranean stock, the Pelasgians of Herodotus, the Eurafricans of modern ethnology, worshiped unindividualized powers. These "gods" were things and not persons, a statement borne out by Plato, who says that the earliest Greeks, like other barbarians, worshiped the sun, moon, stars, heaven and earth. These *theoi* were the germs of the later gods whom we meet in Homer. The Mediterraneans of the mainland were simply more backward than their brothers of Crete and appear to have evolved anthropomorphic personal gods at a much later time. That Herodotus was right in his statement about the origin of the Greek gods is borne out both by comparative religion and archæology.

The comparative study of religions shows us that everywhere men do not at first attribute personality to the things they worship, but that this is an idea saturated with ages of reflection. Long before gods are clothed with animal or human forms is the stage of religious development known as animism, when gods are intangible things dwelling everywhere in nature—in stones, rocks, trees, rivers. Thus the early inhabitants of Greece, living in a region of great beauty and variety, were led to sympathize strongly with the material world about them and saw agencies full of energy in every object. In this way they gave a soul and will to the all-nourishing earth, the benevolent sun, the restless sea, the whispering wind and irresistible storm. Everything that moved or grew seemed to them to be full of life. In course of time, instead of continuing to deify these things, they tried to set a personal god above them, who directs them. At first they conceived these spirits as animals, like Apollo's Pegasus, who caused the fountain of Hippocrene to gush forth on the top of Helicon by the blow of his hoof; later they imagined them as men, or men and animals

combined, like the River-gods, which were conceived as bulls with human heads, to typify the tremendous power of the onsweeping current and at the same time the ingenuity of mind which directs it. Thus the early Greeks peopled all nature with spirits—nymphs, dryads, satyrs, fauns, spirits of wood and mountain and river. Later on, in historical times, this process was helped by art and in the final stages included abstract ideas, as we hear of statues erected to such personifications as "Peace," "Concord" and "Mercy." As Reinach puts it, the Greeks, beginning with endowing all bodies with thought, ended by endowing all thoughts with body. Such animistic notions survived into the latest days. Certain of the Arcadians, for example, who were always more backward than the rest of the Greeks, sacrificed at Trapezus still in the second century of our era to "lightning, thunder and hurricanes," as if to live beings. The cult of Hestia is perhaps the best example. Originally Hestia meant simply "Holy Hearth" and to the end of polytheism never became a separate personality. These animistic notions in historical days became transformed by the imagination of poets into the beautiful stories which have colored all modern literatures.

Fetishism grew out of animism—the superstitious use of objects invested with mysterious potency, either for protective magic or higher communion with a deity. From the earlier Ægean days down to our time this has been an important factor in the religion of the Græco-Roman world. I have already spoken of the "bætylic" cult of sacred stones and pillars in the Minoan-Mycenæan period. In Greece such rude pillars survived to the latest days side by side with masterpieces of sculpture. Pausanias, a Greek who travelled over the mainland in the age of the Antonines, and who has left us an invaluable record of religious customs, mentions several. Thus at Pharæ, a town of Achæa, he records an image of Hermes,

which was nothing but a square block surmounted by a bearded head. He says that thirty square stones revered as gods stood near it, and adds that in ancient days all the Greeks worshiped such unwrought stones. He also says that the images in an old shrine of the Graces were meteoric stones, as also one of Eros at Thespiæ. Now the square herm at Pharæ was merely a step in advance over these unwrought stones. Hermes, who appears in Homer as a beautiful messenger with golden rod and winged sandals, was, therefore, originally only a boundary stone. Thus there can be no doubt of his Mediterranean origin in herm form, just as there is none concerning that of the Graces and many other divinities. In the earliest days, then, in Pelasgian Arcadia and elsewhere, tree trunks, unwrought stones and limbless pillars were objects of worship just as they were in Crete. Though the trees are gone, some of the pillars have survived and we can see them both at Cnossus and Mycenæ. The best example of such a pillar on the mainland is the famous "Lion Gate" of Mycenæ. There on the pediment over the gate is a Doric column, resting on an altar-like base, with a lion on either side. This is not a "Lion Gate" at all, but a pillar shrine guarded by lions; the pillar is a god and has a peculiar shape, tapering downwards like the human form. The same pillar has come to life in a seal impression found at Cnossus; for here it has become a goddess standing on a cairn of stones, who is guarded by lionesses. The undifferentiated Pelasgian god has already developed in Crete personality and sex. Probably all such early anthropomorphized images—long existent in Crete but just emerging in the Greece of Homer's time—were evolved like this Cnossian "Lion Goddess," from just such upright sacred columns as that of Mycenæ. And doubtless the tree preceded the pillar.

PRIMITIVE PELASGIAN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

We can recover something of the Pelasgian, *i.e.,* Ægean ritual as it was practiced in Greece. The Homeric ritual of sacrifice was simple and uniform, consisting of prayer, the sprinkling of grain and a burnt offering; a part of the flesh of the victim was tasted by the worshipers and then given to the gods, sublimated by fire in order to reach them, and the rest was eaten at a banquet with wine. This ritual is not essentially Greek nor even Aryan. We find that Jahweh enjoys burnt sacrifices and that his worshipers have a sacrificial feast. There was also a different ritual, one in honor of the powers of the underworld, *i.e.,* to dead men or heroes. Pausanias tells us of it and shows us that the dead required all the sacrificial animal and the worshipers were not allowed even to taste it. The victim was slain over a trench with his head downward, just as Odysseus sacrifices in the Odyssey before he descends into Hell. In the Olympian sacrifice, on the contrary, the head was always turned upward. Where rites were performed to both heroes and Olympians, the former, as we learn from Pausanias's account of the change in ritual at the sacrifice to Heracles at Sicyon from hero to god, were older and went back to the Mediterranean stratum, the Olympian replacing the hero rites later. Thus the two rituals often, as at Sicyon, came into conflict, the Olympian ousting the earlier.

The hero cult at the tomb presupposed that the dead man's spirit was hovering nearby ready to be appeased. Wherever the dead are buried, such a belief in the world of ghosts is sure to be found. The dead man becomes a sort of god to whom his descendants sacrifice. Now the invading Hellenes did not bury their dead, but burnt them: consequently the spirit did not hover about the tomb, but fled to some faraway place, as the soul of Patroclus does in the Iliad, where it could exert no influ-

ence on the living. The custom of cremation came with the invaders from Central Europe, where their ancestors were accustomed to great forests for use in building funeral pyres. Thus Tacitus tells us that the ancient Germans burned their chiefs. In this way the survivors were freed from the greatest fear which haunts primitive men—the fear of the ghost-world. Mycenæan tombs, on the other hand, show that the Mediterraneans buried their dead. Many objects found in them—arms, ornaments and the usual funeral furniture—supplied the dead with things which belonged to them on earth and prove that the Mycenæan Greeks believed in an after-life. But even at Mycenæ there seems to be no evidence of a large ghost element such as we find in Egypt and Babylon and even in Christianity. Perhaps the prehistoric Greek was worse off in this respect than his successor, the classical Greek, but even so he seems to have worried little about his future. Most of the early terror inspired by the powers of the lower world fortunately later was changed into the action of the benign functions of vegetation gods or else faded away, surviving only here and there in folk-lore.

The ghost of a murdered man, according to the Greek view of homicide, still held in Æschylus's day, became an embodied curse, personified as a Fury, and continued to haunt the murderer to the end of his life. The blood of the slain man caused a pollution which, according to the old *lex talionis,* could only be expelled by the blood of his murderer. But such an idea of an unending feud is not Homeric. The Epic Achæans, like the old Germans, believed that atonement could be made by the payment of blood money—*wergeld.* Thus, in this respect, also, the Homeric and the Pelasgian ideas were opposed. There are also evidences in this older ritual of a more sombre side—human sacrifice and blood magic. Though the facts about human sacrifice are not yet fully explained, we

know it existed in Mediterranean times in Greece, if not in Crete, and it is equally certain that survivals of it remained into historical days. In Mycenæan graves human bones have been found at the doorways. Whether they symbolize an act of worship or merely imply rites of tendance, a feeling that the dead needed companions on their journey below, is of little consequence; for in any case they must be the remains of slain captives or slaves. By Homer's time a change had begun, for the poet blames Achilles for his cruelty in slaying Trojan captives at the grave of Patroclus. Encouraged once by the Delphic oracle, by the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. the custom had become rare and repellent, as we see from the Platonic dialogue *Minos,* where Greeks and barbarians are contrasted in this respect. Still it was kept up in the ghastly rites of Zeus Lycæus in Arcadia and in the barbarous sacrament of Zeus Laphystius in Bœotia and Thessaly. Euripides, in his drama *Iphigenia among the Taurians,* attests that a similar sacrifice existed in Brauron in Attica before his day. The Locrian sacrifice of maidens to appease Athena Ilias had fallen into disuse by the fourth century B.C. The inhuman custom was continued in certain parts of the Roman Empire down to Hadrian's day. Generally such rites were piacular, the sacrifice to an offended god being a scapegoat for the life of the whole people as a vicarious offering; again it was agricultural in motive, blood being shed as a form of magic to promote fertility.

Though Homer says nothing about magical rites, we know how primitive they are. The old cult of sacred stones taught that such objects had magical powers to cure diseases and purge homicides of guilt. Certain statues of Olympic victors of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., like those of the Thasian Theagenes and the Thessalian Polydamus, were supposed to heal fevers. Many a Greek myth is the child of magic. Thus Danæ is not to be

explained as an allegory meaning that "gold opens all doors," but merely as a golden rain with which Zeus visits Earth. The *Thesmophoria*—one of the oldest festivals at Athens—was still in historical days largely concerned with magical rites aimed at increasing fertility, such as strewing the fields with the remains of pigs consecrated to the goddesses of earth. The *Thargelia*, another Athenian festival, was concerned with the scapegoat, with a ritualistic scourging and transference of sin. All such phenomena are magical. Certain Athenian officials in historical times were called "Windlullers," because they had magical powers to lull the winds to sleep. In the fifth century B.C. the efficacy of magic was recognized by law. Thus a Tean inscription gives a law which threatens those who used magic against individuals or state. This "black" magic was still practised in Pausanias's day at Haliartus, in Bœotia, and it was probably a lineal descendant of Mediterranean magic. Plato, in his last work, the *Laws*, is not certain whether he believes in the efficacy of magic or not. Despite all this and similar evidence it may be said that magic was never so prevalent in Greece as in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and that what did exist was generally beneficent in character and its ceremonies were refined.

We see, then, that there are not only two strata of theology in the historic religion of Greece, but two of ritual: an upper stratum, belonging to the Olympian system, which had little notion of the ghost-world, placation of the angry dead nor magical rites of purification—in short, no ceremonies of "aversion" or riddance, and a lower stratum of the indigenous Southerners which included elements common to the Ægean and early Eastern religions, stone, pillar and tree worship, belief in the world of spirits and the efficacy of magic. Many other crude, though harmless, survivals of this later stratum might be mentioned, such as the sacrifice known as the

*Buphonia,* kept up to a late period at the altar of Zeus Polieus on the Acropolis, which was a medley of magical rites; or the court held at the Prytaneum in Athens, at which animals and lifeless things were tried, condemned and punished, a court having its origin in the dim animistic past and still flourishing in the time of Demosthenes and surviving for centuries later.

### ORIENTAL INFLUENCES ON EARLY GREEK RELIGION

We have seen, then, that within its own limits the early Mediterranean religion had begun even on the mainland of Greece to give form and personality to its undifferentiated gods. But we are still a long way from Homer's gods. It was not the Epic poets who completed the work of differentiation. The process was helped on by another factor—the second in the makeup of Greek religion—influences from the Oriental nations. The priestesses of Zeus at Dodona, the oldest Greek oracle, told Herodotus that the Pelasgians in course of time adopted the names of their *theoi* from Egypt and the credulous historian believed that the names of all the Greek gods, with few exceptions, had always existed in Egypt. Many modern scholars, like Foucart, have overestimated this Egyptian influence on the early religion of Greece. The truth is that the early Greeks were influenced by religious ideas not only from Egypt but from the whole East. Many Greek legends, like those of Io, Danaus and Cadmus, tell us of this Eastern influence, and the later world of the Iliad and Odyssey was touched at every point by the South—Crete, Egypt and Libya, and by the East—Phœnicia, Syria and Asia Minor. The recent excavations in Egypt and on the prehistoric sites of the Ægean area have shown that this contact was far older than Homer. The pre-Hellenic civilization was saturated with Oriental influences. Flinders Petrie, in 1887, discovered at Kahun in Middle Egypt foreign pot-

tery which he called Ægean, and later discoveries in Crete showed that he was right. This pottery, found in deposits of the XII and XIII dynasties (before 1800 to about 1700 B.C.), is of the type known as Kamarais ware and belongs to the Middle Minoan period of Crete. Again, in 1899, the same archæologist found at Tell-el-Amarna in Egypt, in deposits of the early fourteenth century B.C., many fragments of Mycenæan pottery. Mycenæan vases were also found in Phœnician Sidon in 1885, and later the tombs of Enkomi in Cyprus disclosed articles of Mycenæan art of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. On the beautiful inlaid sword blades from the shaft graves of Mycenæ Egyptian animals are represented—ichneumons—commonly known as Pharaoh's rats—hunting duck. Conversely, vases from Mycenæ have been found in Egypt, Phœnicia and Cyprus. Thus we see that if the Pelasgians did not borrow, it was not from a lack of opportunity; the wonder is that all this foreign influence was not too great for them to assimilate.

### THE HELLENIC INVASION

Before reaching Homer's pantheon, a third and last step must be noted in the prehistoric development of Greek religion. This Mediterranean religion, after developing from within and assimilating foreign influences for centuries, was finally taken over by the Hellenic invaders, and the resultant union of religious beliefs and practices formed what we call the historic religion of Greece. Who these Hellenes were and when they established themselves in the Balkans has given rise to endless discussion. For many reasons it is certain they came from the North, being gradually pushed southward by successive waves of migration of Indo-European tribes from the Danube valley. When they first appeared in Greece we cannot definitely say, as tradition preserves no memory of the movement. The first migration seems

to have been followed, after an interval of some centuries, by a second, which came by way of the Northwest, to which many traditions bear witness. These Dorians, as we call them, instead of dispossessing their predecessors, passed straight on across Central Greece and the Corinthian Gulf into the Peloponnesus, where, blending with the Mediterraneans, they formed the bulk of the later Greek population in the peninsula; thence they passed on into Crete, the isles of the Archipelago and southeastern Asia Minor. This later movement took place not later than the twelfth century. Whether the walls, palaces and tombs of Argos, Tiryns and Mycenæ were built by them or wrested from the earlier peoples is not important, for the civilization which they reflect was certainly not Hellenic. The Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides were both aware of the fact that these Hellenes were late-comers into Greece. The latter says that they, rather than the Pelasgians, were the leaders of the warriors against Troy, the first collective enterprise which gave unity to Greece, and that the Greeks owed to this unity their Pantheon and differentiated gods. Long ago Gladstone remarked on the analogies between the Achæans of Homer and the Germans of Tacitus—their tall stature, fair hair and blue eyes. Ridgeway, Hall and many other more scientific scholars have since shown that the Achæans of Homer differed also in many essentials of their material culture—in their armor, dress and customs of burial—from the Mycenæan Mediterraneans, but agreed with that of the northern barbarians of Central Europe. The Hellenes, then, were merely a branch of those northerners who, as Dorians or later Gauls, have repeatedly invaded the south and blended with the indigenous peoples.

Miss Harrison professes to see the atmosphere of the Norse Eddas in Homer's Olympians. They are often depicted as big and turbulent because they are, in part, northern gods, and size and excess are Teutonic rather

than Greek characteristics. Thus Poseidon, the Earth-shaker, goes into battle on the plains of Ilium shouting as "loud as nine or ten thousand men shout in battle," and this cry "puts strength into the Achæans' hearts." Just so Tacitus was surprised at the "harsh note and confused roar" of the German warriors, which was "not so much an articulate sound as a general cry of valor" (Germania, iii). The same god takes three strides from Samothrace and with the fourth is in Ægæ of Achæa—surely the stride of a northern giant. The brutal rage of Zeus is northern, as when he "wills to dash the other gods from their seats" (Il. i, 580–1), or when he "caught his son by the foot and hurled him from the divine threshold of Olympus" (Il. i, 591). Zeus "beats his wife with stripes and hangs her up with anvils to her feet" (Il. xv, 17 *seq.*)—a scene which immediately suggests the well-known plight of Gunther on his wedding night in the Song of the Nibelungs. Zeus tells Hera she is so vengeful that "she would like to eat Priam alive" (Il. iv, 34). But, as Miss Harrison says, such is the magic of Homer's verse that we forget these are not the ways of Greek gods. Homer's gods are simply, in the main, foreigners; they make no claim to having created the world like other gods have done, but only to have conquered it. They are royal robbers, who attend neither to agriculture nor government, but fill their time with feasting and fighting, with love-making and intrigue.

Long before history began, then, these factors, primitive Pelasgian beliefs, Oriental influences, and after millennia, it may be, of this fusion, successive impulses from the north, were transformed by the Epic poets into the Olympian system. With the Homeric age the fusion was complete and the Greek religious spirit had acquired its characteristic trend. The poets gathered the mountain gods of the Hellenic invaders into a family on Olympus, their old sacred hill. The gods were called Olympian

from this mountain and from Olympia in Elis, where the greatest of them had his greatest festival, two places at opposite ends of Greece, showing the Hellenic migrations southward—migrations which are proven by history and dialect. For a long time we believed they were primitive; their bright forms dazzled us into believing that they had no background. We now know that centuries of development lay behind them, that they were late comers imposed on a very different background which has been disclosed to us by the kind of evidence we have outlined.

### THE HOMERIC POEMS AND THE OLYMPIAN SYSTEM

Under this title I shall not introduce you to the age-long Homeric question—the date and authorship of the Iliad and Odyssey. Suffice it to say that these incomparable poems are the meagre survivors of an immense Epic literature which slowly grew up in Greece and Ionia in the Heroic Age—a period roughly comprising the twelfth to the eighth centuries B.C., and that they reflect largely the tradition of the Hellenic invaders. Modern destructive criticism has doubted the existence of a poet named Homer and contents itself with the belief that the Epics which bear that name are, in their existing form, the product of various bards and ages, and that they received substantially their present form under Peisistratus, the tyrant of Athens, who, in the sixth pre-Christian century, had them arranged to be recited at the Panathenaic festival in Athens.

Sir Gilbert Murray has shown that the Olympian religion came to Greece as a sort of reformation, for with all its imperfections it brought a kind of order into the chaos of gods which had slowly evolved among the Mediterranean inhabitants of the Ægean area. The new system was patriarchal and monogamous in character; that of the Ægeans and Hittites had been matrilinear and saturated with ideas of polygamy, sex-emblems and fer-

tility rites and goddesses. It was also aristocratic, for the Homeric poems were the literature of the chieftains and consequently largely free of popular superstitions. However, in their present form they were never court poems, though they may have originated in lays sung by travelling bards in royal castles. Only in their latest strata do they show traces of earlier Mediterranean beliefs—ancestor worship, propitiation of the dead and belief in the ghost world. In the main they were Ionian in origin and it was the progressive and sceptical Ionians who were best fitted to lead in a reform against the older popular beliefs and practices. These Ionians were descended from the men who had fled across the Ægean before the later Hellenes and they possessed the same spirit of freedom which the men of the Heroic Age had displayed. Surrounded by barbarous tribes of the interior of Asia Minor, they were the first to feel that they were Hellenes as opposed to barbarians, and, long before the greatness of Athens, had become the most cultured representatives of the Hellenic race.

Whereas in most countries the oldest surviving literature is religious in character—like the Hindu Vedas, collections of hymns to the gods for purposes of worship, or the Gathas of the Avesta, containing the utterances of the Iranian prophet—the Greek Epic was secular in origin. The old robber kings of the Heroic Age had had little interest in building up a powerful religion, but left this, like all honest work, to the common folk. Nor was it to be expected that the educated bards of Ionia, who sang of the glorious deeds of these kings long since passed away, should have added much religious sentiment to a system which they looked upon more as romance than religion. They had little faith or reverence for the Olympians and consequently the gods play a far more human rôle in the poems than that assigned to them by later Greek religion. The Ionian rhapsodes merely trans-

formed with their magic minstrelsy the kings and gods of the barbarous past and changed the old era of brutality into one of chivalrous adventure. Whatever was good in the old tradition was kept, while all the rest was either passed over or refined away. They tried to bring order into the old religious chaos and adapt it to a new social order. Though the Epic largely failed in its aims, the Olympian religion by 1000 B.C. had superseded the Pelasgian at its ancient sacred centres—Delphi, Argos, Olympia—and was publicly professed. The poems, which at first had been composed for the amusement of the nobles, became in course of time the literature of the people, and were recited to the multitudes at the various festivals. The Olympian divinities, radiating especially from the recitation of the poems at the Panathenaic festival at Athens, became not only for the Athenians but for all the Greeks ideals of humanity and the foundation of the religion of the historical Greeks.

Let us rapidly survey the chief characteristics of Homer's system. Though much of the picture is missing, still the poet gives us a fairly complete and consistent account of an advanced polytheism. The Olympians are sharply defined personalities, clear-cut individuals, colossal men and women, fairer and stronger than mortals, but still conceived in their glorified image. They are so humanly conceived that the later artist could embody in sculpture or painting ideas straight from Homer's descriptions. This is exemplified by the tradition handed down by Strabo that those well-known lines in the first book of the Iliad (528–30), which close the scene in which Thetis importunes Zeus in behalf of her son Achilles, suggested to Phidias the conception of his most famous work, the gold and ivory statue of the father of gods and men for the temple at Olympia: "He spake and with his steel-grey brows Cronus' son nodded assent,

and the immortal locks fell waving from his divine head, and he shook mighty Olympus."

These human gods are able to work wonders and to take on any shape they will. They dwell together on the lofty crowned Olympus in Thessaly and form a political community with its hierarchy of rank and duty, its contentions for honor and power, its occasional revolutions and political intrigues, its public meetings and festivals. In a word, life on Olympus is a magnified picture of life on earth. Though superhuman, they are like mortals in the ordinary necessities of life, requiring food and drink and sleep. The highest of them—Zeus, Apollo, Hera, Hermes, Athena—were not nature gods like the personalities of the Vedas, bound up with the forces of the natural world. Apollo was not the Sun nor Athena the Sky, but they were beings with powers as real to the Greeks as Christ and Mary are to Christians. Even Zeus, though responsible for the phenomena of sky and air, was not the thunder nor the sky—even if a few indications point to the influence of earlier animistic conceptions of the divine sky. A few lesser divinities, like the gods of the winds and rivers, the nymphs and fauns, were pure nature powers and never became fully anthropomorphic. Thus Hestia, "Holy Hearth," Helios the Sun, Selene the Moon, Gæa the Earth, never became fully personal, for these had their origin in the remote animistic period and survived to the latest times. Though animate, they had little religious value and exerted little influence on the moral, social and spiritual natures of the Greeks. Like mortals, the Olympians were subject to moral weakness and Olympus merely reflected earthly ethical notions. The Ionian bards did not always take them seriously, but often used them in their poetry for purposes of ornament, and, sometimes, as in the later strata of the Odyssey, even for burlesque. They accorded little reverence to Zeus or Hera. Zeus is as majestic as his thunder in

his celestial aspect, but is far below mortals when viewed as father and husband, while Hera is anything but a dutiful consort. Ares is despised as a bloodthirsty Thracian coward, while Aphrodite is rebuked for joining in the fray of men. These two are the subjects of a very melodramatic scene in a famous passage of the Odyssey. In short, only three Olympians are respectfully handled—Apollo, Poseidon and Athena. Gladstone summed it up well by saying that none of Homer's gods was as good as the swineherd Eumæus.

The blend of the religious ideas of the northerners and southerners explains some of these incongruities. The nearer the Olympians approach to the old Mediterranean nature gods, the more reverend do they become. We laugh at the lame smith of the gods puffing and blowing through Olympus' halls, but we find Hephæstus, the old fire-god, in combat with the river-god Xanthus, a truly majestic figure. The greater the interference of the gods in the affairs of men, the later is the composition. However, despite all the levity displayed in the poems, Homer's deeper utterances impute an advanced morality to the supreme god Zeus, who, though revengeful and jealous like Jahweh, is generally pictured as a god of righteousness and pity toward men. In the opening lines of the Odyssey he says it is not the gods but the wickedness of men's hearts which brings evil. He is the protector of the good and the punisher of the wicked; whoever neglects the prayers of the unfortunate or violates the sanctity of suppliant or guest receives his recompense of punishment. There is even a glimmering in the poems of the dark powers of the underworld, which send forth the Erinyes to punish the perjurer.

On the whole, then, the religious tone of Homer is in harmony with advanced notions of morality. The atmosphere of the poems is bright and cheerful, the service is beautiful though solemn with hymn and dance. The rela-

tionship existing between the gods and men is generally sociable. The ritual is simple and on a high plane of theism; it shows but little trace of savage rites and is far freer from magic than that of later ages. Sacrifice is a friendly communion with the god revealing a sense of sin and need of expiation. The favor of the Olympians, like that of northern gods, is gained by the offering of meat and wine. The cult has altars, temples, the beginning of priesthoods and even idols.

### THE HOMERIC HELL

We moderns have a feeling that religion ought to concern itself with the question of life after death. But the Homeric system, while telling us much of theology and ritual, gives us little notion of eschatology. The gods, to be sure, are immortal, but good men do not go to Olympus to live with them nor bad ones to Tartarus. If we except certain late additions to the poems, we find that these are little concerned with any concept of the soul-life after death, and that they show neither any cult of the dead nor need of propitiating them, though we know that the Mycenæan Greek had such beliefs and practices. The fear of the ghost world seems, for certain reasons, to have grown strong in the seventh century, and we have a reflection of it in the later strata of the Odyssey, especially in the Nekyia or Descent of Odysseus into Hell in the eleventh book, and the scene copied from it at the opening of the last book, in which the wooers are escorted down the dank ways by Hermes. The *Descent*, the most striking episode of the Epic, seems to have little in common with the Olympian system, but rather, in the main, to be the recrudescence of older Pelasgian beliefs of the hereafter. Christ believes it was influenced by Egyptian ideas. The catalogue of famous women (xi, 225–332) is manifestly the composition of a bard of the Hesiodic School. The description of Hades

itself, which Odysseus, represented as still seated at the trench without, could not have entered, and especially the picture of retributive punishment meted out by Minos to certain exemplary sinners—Tantalus, Sisyphus, Tityus (566–627)—are quite out of harmony with Homer's spirit and have been assigned by scholars to a late rhapsodist—perhaps to Onomacritus, the poet of Peisistratus's time, as Wilamowitz believes—who took the scenes from Orphism, the new religion which had developed by the sixth century, when Orphic mystic societies were teaching that only initiated and purified souls could escape the torments of Hell.

This Homeric picture of Hades' realm is dark and gloomy in the extreme and had a tremendous influence, not only on all succeeding poets, but on the minds of the ordinary worshipers, an influence which can be traced all through the subsequent centuries of Greek history. It has often been remarked that Homer's picture of life on earth is hopeless and melancholy. Almost every reflective passage contains a note of sadness. Thus Glaucus (Il. vi, 146 *seq.*), says to Diomedes: "Even as are the generations of leaves, such are those likewise of men." But if life on earth was hard and cheerless, it was far more desirable than death; if man were the plaything of the gods on earth, there was no hope that the hereafter would right these wrongs and inequalities, no hope that he who had lived a pious life would receive any reward. As Gruppe has said: "Behind the woe in which he thinks he lives, the Homeric Greek sees a greater never-ending woe before."[5] For all the hopeless fancies conjured up by the imagination of man as to his future state, none is so hopeless as that depicted in the Nekyia. Erebos, the realm of King Hades, is either far to the West, or, like the mediæval Hell, deep down below the earth. Tartarus, the deepest abyss, is a penitentiary hell not for the wicked,

[5] *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte*, I, p. 1010.

but for rebellious Titans. The Elysian Fields are mentioned only once in the poems (Od. iv, 561) and the Isles of the Blest not at all—for these happy abodes were not yet definitely conceived. The meads of asphodel, on which the spirits tread, are frequently mentioned; the gray leaves and yellow blossoms of this plant, to-day so frequently seen on Greek graves, should leave little doubt that they were symbolic of the pallor of death and the gloom of the underworld. Homer's heroes, good and bad, are sent to this cheerless abode, where their existence is even more terrible than their dwelling place. Rohde says it is wrong to speak of a future life in Homer at all; the spirits below lead only a shadowy copy of life on earth, an existence almost as neutral as Sheol. Even this shadowy existence is not everlasting—its one ray of hope; for Odysseus sees no ghost older than the second or third generation before his time. Pindar's account (frag. 129) of the dead entertaining themselves with horse-racing and athletic contests, with games of draughts and music of the lyre, has no counterpart here. The ghost world had gained much additional vigor by his time. The very utterance of the "strengthless heads of the dead" is but a timorous, inarticulate squeak, which the poet likens to the gibbering of bats. Their spectral forms, bereft of bones and sinews, "sweep shadow-like around" and all, with the exception of the old Theban seer Teiresias, are devoid of intelligence and can be recalled only to a momentary consciousness by drinking the blood of the victim which Odysseus had slain over the trench. Here there is no bliss, no rest, no peace. Amid such gruesome surroundings Achilles could well reply to Odysseus's words of praise for his former renown (Od. xi, 488 *seq.*): "Nay, speak not comfortably to me of death, oh great Odysseus. Rather would I live on ground the hireling of another, with a landless man who has no great livelihood, than bear sway among all the dead that be departed."

### THE MYSTERY CULTS

It is no wonder, then, that the dark features of such a view of the hereafter should have called forth a protest which proclaimed a definite hope of future happiness and a less definite fear of future misery. Such ideas were communicated by the *Mysteries,* a class of rites not mentioned by Homer, the greatest of them connected with a god and goddess—Dionysus and Demeter—who had no seat on Olympus. These ceremonies were practised by voluntary associations of individuals who pledged themselves not to disclose anything seen or heard at the secret meetings. Each mystery had its own apparatus of symbols and formularies, so that the initiates knew one another just as Free Masons do now; each consisted of two parts—a sacrifice and rites in which certain foods were tasted, objects seen and handled and words spoken. Why certain Greek cults were secret and others public is not clear. The older explanation that the mysteries were pre-Hellenic and the conquered Pelasgians wished to hide their ancient ceremonies is hardly tenable, since in that case we should find them not in the hands of the nobles, but of the common folk. Furthermore, the divinities chiefly worshiped were Aryan and not Pelasgian. There were mysteries in honor of Gæa, Aglaurus, and the Graces in Attica, of Hecate in Ægina and of Themis. These may all be related forms of the Earth-mother, powers connected with the underworld. The most important were the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries. Those of Samothrace, which later rivalled these in attraction, were neither entirely Hellenic in origin nor ever completely Hellenized.

### THE ORPHIC MYSTIC SOCIETIES

The Orphic mystic societies introduced a Thraco-Phrygian religious tradition into Greece, which was originally connected with the wine-god Dionysus and with

Sabazius. An account of these mysteries would mean an account of the Dionysiac religion; here we can only touch upon the main doctrines of the sect and their influence. The worship of Dionysus, originally a nature-god of northern origin, revealing his power over the vine and in the underworld, had found its way into Greece as early as the tenth century B.C., and by the sixth had been accepted by most of the Greek communities. The rites were mystic and secret and were performed mostly at night; they were characterized by ecstatic and orgiastic self-abandonment, in which his votaries—especially women—believed they were united with the god and possessed his power for a time. A savage sacrament consisted in eating the raw flesh of an animal regarded as the incarnation of the god. Thus the idea of a god dying and being born again was inculcated in this non-Greek worship. The taming of this wild god of the north into a civic deity, and the disciplining of his wild bands of Mænads into a Greek cult, was a long and difficult process. But slowly the savage elements disappeared, though the cult ever afterwards remained more emotional than any other.

This process of transformation was arrested by a wave of religious fervor which spread over the mainland in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.—under the name of Orpheus, the legendary minstrel of Thrace, to whom the new mystic doctrines were ascribed. This later esoteric worship probably also came from the north, even if indubitable evidence of Cretan and Egyptian influence is found in it. We know the ideas and hopes of the initiates chiefly from a series of gold foil tablets which were found in tombs at Sybaris, in South Italy, one from Crete and one from near Rome, which preserve fragments of a metrical liturgy or creed dating from the third century B.C., if not earlier. These were buried with the Orphic dead as charms against the dangers which beset

their journey below and to open to them the gates of Heaven, and they form what Gomperz has rightly called an "Orphic Book of the Dead." The initiated soul proclaims its divine descent in these words: "I am the son of Earth and Starry Heaven"; "I come from the pure"; "I have paid the penalty of sin"; "I have flown out of the weary, sorrowful circle of life." Its future reward is made certain by these words: "O blessed and happy one, thou hast put off thy mortality and shalt become divine."

This was a new and strange message to the Greeks, a direct protest against the Homeric concept of the soul's hereafter. Though Homer's picture of life is melancholy, still life is the centre of interest and far preferable to death. But to the Orphic, life here in the body is not life, but a living death. What we call death is merely the door of freedom for the soul from the body, its prison-house. The real life, then, is hereafter, when the soul rejoins its former communion with the gods, for it is divine like them both in its origin and nature.

When it enters into a human body it contracts sin and its constant aim, like that of a fallen angel, is release and recovery of its former glory. Since it lost its power through sin, it can regain it only through purification, which is accomplished by the observance of a certain conduct of life—the avoidance of the taint of meat, of funerals, of childbirth. The eating of flesh was regarded as mere cannibalism, for according to the Orphic doctrine of metempsychosis, "the circle of life," all animals were kin. After cycles of lives the soul finally reaches its goal and lives on keeping its personality—for the Orphics had no notion of absorption like the Buddhists. Thus under the term Orphism we class all the elements lacking in the Epic tradition: a sense of original sin, the soul being condemned to earthly existence as a punishment for the early crime of the Titans, man's ancestors,

who had treacherously slain the young god Zagreus; the need of purification for that sin; the idea of the incarnate man-god; escape from evil and immortality. These elements, foreign to the Olympian system, were un-Greek influences from the north, from Crete, Egypt and Asia Minor, elements which easily fused with the older Mediterranean beliefs.

These doctrines were especially strong in Crete and Athens. In South Italy they were early crossed by Pythagoreanism, the influence probably being mutual. The Pythagorean brotherhoods became its militant orders and their priests were the first European missionaries. The downfall of these societies certainly saved Greece from the danger of establishing Orphism as a secular power, which would have strangled the free Greek spirit with sacerdotalism and all that goes with it. Henceforth its influence was private, and some of the greatest Greek minds were attracted by it. Pindar's eschatology seems to have been largely inspired by it; his idea of the next world as a Purgatory, or place of penance and purgation from personal and ancestral taint, was Orphic, as also his doctrine of reincarnation and final reward for the purified soul. The Orphic idea of the divine origin of the soul is seen in one of his fragments (102): "Blessed is he who, having seen these things, goes below the hollow earth; he sees the end of life and the beginning of the gods." Though Æschylus and Sophocles held aloof from Orphism, Euripides, true to his nature, was both attracted to and repelled by it. In his inspired drama, the Bacchanals, he makes the votaries rejoice to be one with the god and to be called by his name. The philosopher Empedocles borrowed much from the new faith—his insistence on guilt and purification, and his cycle of reincarnations.

Plato, though protesting, like Theophrastus and Plutarch after him, against the professional mystery mongers

and spiritual quacks, who, under the name of Orpheus, went about in the fourth century vending incantations and promises of indulgences through purifications and mystic initiations, still was intensely interested in the real beliefs of the Orphics and deeply indebted to them for some of his deepest thinking. His doctrine of the soul in the Phædrus is Orphic; his cosmic Eros or Love in that dialogue and in the Timæus was an Orphic god; his glorification of inspired madness, which he calls one of Heaven's blessings, certainly came from the Thracian cult of Dionysus; his immortal soul striving to reach the heights of the god-life, in its several incarnations improving through righteousness and deteriorating through unrighteousness, making man in the one case and beast in the other, was based on the Orphic "wheel of life." According to Plato, each soul has the choice to go upwards or downwards each thousand years, and it must pass through a cycle of ten thousand years before it reaches its original state again, for only the souls of philosophers and lovers are enabled, after choosing the better life three times, to escape in three thousand. Plato's doctrine of the soul's *anamnesis* or remembrance of the glorious sights of justice, truth, wisdom and temperance among the gods is also based on the Orphic well of remembrance, Mnēmosyne. In the Phædo he makes Socrates quote the founder of the mysteries as saying that (69c, Jowett) "he who passed unsanctified and uninitiated into the world below will live in a slough, but he who arrives there, after initiation and purification, will dwell among the gods." For "many, as they say in the mysteries, are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are the mystics," meaning, as I interpret the words, the true philosophers. In brief, it may be said that this mystery religion influenced the poet-philosopher far more than all the gods of Homer. In Hellenistic days, as we shall see, Orphism received

a fresh lease of life at the beginning of the new era of individualism, and as late as Plutarch's time continued to give consolation to the afflicted. Its lofty ideals of morality also contributed much to Christianity. The Orphic Hell influenced the picture of similar tortures depicted in the Apocalyptic literature. Even in the Middle Ages its influence was still felt, when the horrors of the Christian ghost world were increased by the barbarous imagination of the north.

### THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES

The most pan-Hellenic of the mysteries were those celebrated at Eleusis, near Athens, in honor of Demeter and Kore, with a third figure in the background—the god of the lower world, euphemistically called Eubouleus or Pluto, the ravisher and husband of Kore. These rites were originally agrarian and tribal and seem to have been restricted to certain Eleusinian clans. By the fifth century B.C., however, they had become a recognized branch of Athenian public worship, though only initiates were allowed to be present at the ceremonies. By that time, in contrast to the Orphic mysteries, which always remained sectarian, they were opened to all Athenians and all Greeks without distinction of city or tribe, to "all of intelligible speech and pure of blood." Afterwards they were open even to women and children and slaves, and, later, to Romans. When Athens became the focus of Greek life, the Eleusinia became as truly pan-Hellenic in character as the oracle at Delphi or the games at Olympia, and their power did not wane until the advent of Christianity.

To-day we know much more about the Eleusinian mysteries than did the scholars of a generation ago, and yet we know but little. Modern students of comparative religion and anthropology have helped us a good deal in

making reasonable hypotheses, while archæology—the study of vases, reliefs, inscriptions, and especially the results of the excavations carried on at Eleusis—has told us much of their external organization and shown us the deities exactly as they appeared to the ancient initiates. We know that a mimetic drama of the nature of a mediæval Passion Play took place, in which was represented the story of Demeter's sorrowful search for her ravished daughter, and the subsequent marriage of Kore and Pluto and possibly the birth of a sacred child. In the production of such a play we know that no elaborate scenic effects took place in the Eleusinium to represent Heaven and Hell, since the excavations there have disclosed neither substructures nor underground passages. We also know that something more than this drama took place; that the hierophant revealed certain sacred objects and celebrated a holy communion. We have no proof, however, that a more mystic sacrament took place, in which the initiates believed they were partaking of the body of deity, as many scholars have assumed. We also are assured that these rites were not mere magical ones intended to promote the fertility of the fields or the well-being of the mystic. The secret of their tremendous influence cannot be thus explained.

Scholars have made unwearying efforts to solve the problem of the inner esoteric meaning of the ritual. Eleusinian scenes on fifth century vases help very little, since it was sacrilegious for the painter to reveal the mystery. Pagan writers, though showing the good influence of these secret rites, are equally reticent. Few of the Church Fathers, though they were not bound by scruples, were pagans in their youth—like Clement and Arnobius—and so could have been initiated. What was this central mystery? There was certainly a sacred discourse, which could not have been concerned merely with corn

symbolism, as Varro implies, nor with nature philosophy, as certain passages in Cicero seem to indicate. A part of it may have explained the sacred symbols and it may have been colored by the philosophy of the day. But that could not have been all; it is safe to affirm that this discourse held out to the initiates a promise of future happiness. Just how this was done we cannot say. Foucart's notion that the whole object of the mysteries was, like that of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, to provide the initiates mere passwords and magic formulæ to help them on their road below and deliver them from the terrors of Hell, is in harmony with his Egyptianizing theory of their origin, but can no longer be maintained, even if Egyptian influence can be traced in them. A passage in Aristotle helps us in solving the mystery. He says that the initiates "do not learn anything so much as feel certain emotions and are put into a certain mental attitude." Thus the appeal must have been to the eye and imagination—perhaps through a sort of religious mesmerism induced by the solemnity of the occasion, something akin to our Christian communion service or Catholic mass, a phenomenon not difficult to understand when we remember how susceptible Greek imagination was to the solemn pomp of religious pageantry. The initiates would go away, then, with a sense of closer union with the Powers of the underworld and a conviction of their future weal. These mysteries gave to Greek religion an atmosphere of awe and mystery and promise which was largely absent from the public cult. They must have awakened the imagination of the initiates to great heights of spiritual and moral grandeur—even if our knowledge of them does not let us definitely postulate just what the moral or spiritual dogmas were which they inculcated. They truly were, as Dr. Farnell has said, "the highest and purest and most spiritual product of Greek religion."

## THE STATE OF RELIGION IN ATHENS IN THE FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES B.C.

The period roughly extending from 500 to 338 B.C., *i.e.*, from the beginning of the Persian wars to the final loss of Greek independence at the battle of Chæronea, witnessed in secular history the ever-memorable struggle of Greek and barbarian, the gradual rise and the downfall of the imperial city of Athens, the Peloponnesian war, which, viewed from its results, was the greatest in history, the emergence of the Macedonians as the first world power. In the history of culture it saw the bloom of the Attic drama and of Greek lyric in Pindar, the acme of the world's greatest sculpture and architecture, the diffusion of education and the rise of the scientific spirit engendered by the Sophists, and the highest development of philosophy in Plato. In brief, not only the restricted Periclean age, but the two centuries taken together were the greatest in the world's history. Consequently, it is interesting for us to know what the cultivated Greeks in general and their greatest community, Athens, in particular thought about religion.

It is a popular fallacy that the old Homeric polytheism had lost its hold on men's minds by the end of the fifth century. But if we compare the beliefs then held with those of Homer, we shall find that the same deities were still worshiped, that no cult had disappeared nor any of the popular rites fallen into decay. On the contrary, during most of the century, the old system was stronger than ever—even the old animistic belief in the river gods being retained. New deities were added, as Pan from Arcadia at the beginning of the century, and Asclepius from Epidaurus toward the close. While the struggle against Hannibal in Italy had caused the old Roman faith to be shaken, the Greek struggle against Persia had increased belief in the gods who had given them victory. Zeus then received such titles as *Hellenios*, "the god of

the Greeks," his highest political title, and *Eleutherios,* "the god of freedom." A deep conviction of the part which the gods played in men's affairs grew up. Herodotus, Pindar and Æschylus looked upon the Persian struggle as a conflict of moral forces, much as the Allies look upon the present European struggle. Only the Delphic oracle, which had shown a vacillating un-Hellenic spirit during the struggle, had lost its political influence. Again during the Peloponnesian war it had openly taken the side of Athens' enemies, and so thereafter lost all reverence from the Attic people. In the fourth century B.C., Demosthenes contemptuously speaks of it as "the shadow of Delphi." The only influence it exerted henceforth was ethical and religious, when it became a sort of private confessional, which gave sacerdotal advice.

The Modernist spirit of Ionia had not yet vitally influenced the popular notions of religion. The fact that Anaxagoras and Protagoras were tried and Socrates put to death shows how strong the old polytheism still remained. The mutilation of the *Hermæ* on the eve of the sailing of the Sicilian expedition toward the end of the century caused such a commotion at Athens as indirectly to destroy its hopes of success and entail the subsequent downfall of the imperial city. People who laughed at Aristophanes's and Euripides's burlesques of the gods in the theatre were none the less devoted to the worship of these deities. Art made anthropomorphism still stronger throughout the fourth century; sculptures, vase paintings and glyptics of this age are still the most perfect examples of religious art. Perhaps a more spiritual belief than that of Greece would not have endured even such masterpieces with equal patience. In any case, art certainly helped to keep Greek religion from earlier yielding to the influence of alien cults. The philosophers as yet had made little protest against idolatry; Xenophanes

in the sixth century made the most notable, while in the fourth the Stoics condemned both temples and idols.

The influence of literature in these centuries was no less marked than that of art. The subject is too vast to more than adumbrate here. It is easy enough to collect passages from Greek writers which bear on religion, but it is difficult to say how much such material modified the popular beliefs. Pindar, Æschylus and Sophocles seem to have accepted the existing system with but little protest and they tried to ennoble rather than to destroy it. Pindar was the first literary preacher of Greece; his Orphic eschatology first raised the subject of Paradise to the level afterwards attained by Dante and Milton. Sophocles and Æschylus, on the other hand, say little of the hereafter; but all three writers clearly teach the majesty and the mercy of Zeus and Destiny. Pindar gives us the brighter side, while Æschylus pictures the gloomy forces of the world of shades. Pindar antedates Plato in protesting against the ignoble features of the Epic myths. Euripides belonged to a different period, to the Age of Enlightenment, the mental attitude of Modernism. Himself no philosopher, incapable of formulating a system of thought or ethics and with few convictions, he merely stimulated others by his doubts to think. We cannot say what he believed, for he believed different things at different times; but it seems clear that his ultimate idea of God was pantheistic. He protested strongly against immoral myths, but his religious influence on the people must have been small. Aristophanes, his contemporary, never understood him nor his position, but championed the reaction against Modernism, holding it up to ridicule with unparalleled sarcasm.

The influence of the philosophical protest in Greece against religion is a subject on which many volumes have been written. The physical notions of the early Ionians, which gave birth to the free secular science of

Europe, were concerned with theories of cosmogony and could not have clashed seriously with religion, because there were no sacred writings. Though finding little in Zeus, they did not break with the popular faith, but in their explanations went back to the Pelasgian nature gods before Zeus. Thus Thales, the first to seek unity in things, taught that the world came from water, *i.e.,* the old nature deity Oceanus. In the sixth century, however, thinkers became directly concerned with theology and began to speculate on the nature of the godhead. Many of their fragments disclose ideas hostile to the concepts of polytheism, and the main trend of their speculation was against anthropomorphism, tending to define the godhead not as a person but as a spiritual power—a tendency from theism to pantheism. Pythagoras, the mathematician and Orphic mystic, was hostile to the public worship, even though his followers compromised with it. He explained the godhead in mathematical terms and was willing to accept the gods, if he could only find their mathematical equations. The strongest and severest protest against the Homeric system was made in the name of reason and morals by Xenophanes, the poet, theologian and philosopher. In his famous fragments, preserved to us by Clement of Alexandria, he thus assails polytheistic notions: "Mortals think the gods are born and have dress and voice and form like their own." "The Ethiopians imagine their gods are black and flat-nosed: the Thracians make theirs blue-eyed and red-haired." "If oxen or lions had hands or could draw with their hands and make works of art like men, horses would draw figures of gods like horses, oxen like oxen, giving them bodies like the form which they themselves possessed." In another fragment he says, "Homer and Hesiod ascribed to the gods everything disgraceful and shameful among men, theft, adultery and deceit." Over against such vulgar notions he sets his own idea that

"There is one God, greatest both among gods and men, resembling mortals neither in form nor in thought." Thus he rejected not only physical but mental anthropomorphism. This God "without effort swings the universe by the purpose of his mind," and "ever abides in the same place nor moves at all," for he is "all-seeing, all-hearing, all mind." Thus Xenophanes's god is the Universe itself, endued with sense and design. Heraclitus is contemptuous in about the same way, denying that the universe had a creator or a beginning: "This cosmic order, the same for all beings, no god nor man made, but it always was and is and shall be, ever-living fire, blazing up and dying down." His scorn of the popular notions of religion is seen in this passage: "Men pray to idols, just as if one were to converse with houses, not knowing what is the nature of gods and houses." He called the Bacchanalian devotees "night roamers, magians, wild women, mystæ," and pronounced the initiations unholy. He despised all the poets in general as the guides of the populace, and in particular Homer and Hesiod, the former of whom he said "ought to be cast out of the arena and scourged."

Religion, however, had not parted company with philosophy in the sixth and early years of the fifth centuries B.C., for speculation as yet had only influenced the few. But by the second half of the fifth century the state worship had to notice the philosophical protest, for this was the period in which Anaxagoras, Protagoras and Socrates (the latter in 399) were haled into the courts. By the fourth century the need of religion was more real than the state worship could satisfy, and so a strong impulse was given to philosophical speculation. From Plato onwards philosophers were inspired with a desire to explain the world religiously as well as metaphysically, and men turned to philosophy for religious comfort. It is interesting to know the attitude of Plato, the greatest of

Greek thinkers, toward the contemporary religion. Plato was no revolutionary iconoclast of the popular notions as Xenophanes and Heraclitis had been in the sixth or Empedocles in the fifth century. He merely believed in reforming the Homeric mythology, purging it of its immoral features—the stories of the conflict of wills among the gods, their vengeance, jealousy and amours. In the *Republic* (377–8, Jowett) he blames the poets for these ignoble elements and says that they "ought not to be lightly told to young and simple persons; if possible, they had better be buried in silence." For "the young man should not be told that in committing the worst of crimes he is far from doing anything outrageous. . . . and in this will only be following the example of the first and greatest among the gods." He had no idea of abolishing idols nor sacrifices—though, like his teacher Socrates, he inculcated simple offerings. In the *Epinomis* he says the legislator will not change a single detail of the ritual, because he knows nothing of the inner truth back of the form. Even in his most advanced metaphysical speculations he leaves a place for the popular pantheon. His last work, the *Laws*, reflects strongly the popular beliefs and a sympathy with them. Here he accepts most of the religion of the old City-State, only purging the myths about the godhead. In the *Timæus* he ranges the Olympians below the supreme transcendental God of the universe. Here, in the scale of divine creation, they are given the third place, after the Sun and Moon and Planets, which are the second works of the Creator, the first being Cosmic Heaven. They are not altogether immortal nor indissoluble, but are held together eternally by the will of the highest God. To them was given the labor of creating man by weaving mortal and immortal together, and God gave even a part of his own divinity and immortality for this purpose. In this way the morality of mortals is explained, which would have been inexplicable if man

had sprung directly from God. Thus we see Plato's esoteric system left Olympianism almost unimpaired. The old system was enough if it were only strengthened morally. Later schools, which went by his name, were more interested in purely religious speculations and finally degenerated into the mystic superstition of Neo-Platonism. Plato, then, contributed much to the dissemination in Greece of belief in God's spiritual nature, and much to the cleansing of the old Homeric pantheon of its cruder and lower elements.

### RELIGION IN THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN AGE

In conclusion let us briefly consider the state of religion in Greece after the loss of independence at the hands of the Macedonians, during the so-called Hellenistic and Græco-Roman periods down to the time of St. Paul and the earlier Gnostics.

With the establishment of the Macedonian empire and the conquests of Alexander great changes were wrought not only in the political and social life of Greece, but in religion. Some of these changes were in the direction of decay, while others heralded a new life. From this period on the internal development of Hellenism was practically at an end and its further history was concerned only with external changes. The scene now shifts from the Balkan peninsula to an imperial world stretching from Spain to India, from the sands of the Sahara to the steppes of Russia. Its centre is no longer Athens, but in succession Alexandria, Pergamum, Antioch. It is not very difficult to understand why the Greek language followed the armies of Alexander and finally became the means of communication in Egypt, Syria and the East. It is more difficult to understand how Greek culture spread everywhere—even if we do not feel obliged to believe the statement of Plutarch that Homer was commonly read in Asia and that "the

children of the Persians, of the inhabitants of Susa and Gedrosia played the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles" and that the "inhabitants of India, Bactria and the Caucasus worshiped Greek gods." The explanation has been succinctly given in these words of the historian Burckhardt: "Greek culture alone had the capacity to embrace and interpret all the rest of the world; its spirit made a universal appeal through poetry, art and philosophy."

Behind all the changes of this period was the consciousness of a wide-spread failure of Greek ideals, which changed the whole viewpoint of men's ideas of life and of the soul. First, there was the failure of the City-State, which was crushed by Philip and later by the military monarchies set up by Alexander's successors. The decay of local patriotism meant the decay of the idea of patriotism as a Greek ideal. Cosmopolitanism means devotion to no state. Consequently, politics, the lode-stone of the older Greeks, no longer attracted men of ability or character. The failure of the City-State also caused men to lose faith in government in general. It made little difference how opulent the kingdom of Egypt might be or how powerful or stable the empire of Rome might become; still to a thoughtful Greek of this age, with memories of the old independence and liberty, life seemed hardly worth living. Even the propaganda of Hellenism, instituted by Alexander with the idea of teaching Greek ideas to barbarians, seemed to be resulting slowly in the destruction of the ideas it tried to spread. Worst of all, with the loss of the City-State the influence of the old Olympian theology waned, for the two were bound up together. Even before Philip's conquest the philosophical assault on the ancient system had slowly gained ground and had undermined the popular faith without putting an adequate substitute in its place. Men still perfunctorily observed the outward forms of religion but had lost faith in their

efficacy. With unbelief came superstition, and comfort was sought in foreign cults.

Amid the débris of ancient ideals the Hellenistic Greek looked to himself, to his own feelings and thoughts. Instead of trying to live justly, as Socrates had inculcated, and to help his fellow-men by the example of a pious life, it was now his aim to seek personal holiness and salvation. Whereas the aim of the old religion had been the family, the tribe and the City, the aim of the new was the individual. The old Greek had gloried in good works; the later gloried in his personal faith. The loss of political hope, the despair of hoping to arrive at truth through patient inquiry, gave birth to a new ideal—mysticism, asceticism, selfish individualism. Consequently, although the new age was one of enlightenment, of great thinkers like Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus, still it was full of morbidity and pessimism. The Greek now turned to revelations and mysteries, to the neglect of this transitory life in the hope of an eternal sinless one to come. The physical and political world was no longer the interest of religion; its horizon from now on was beyond the tomb.

The decay of Olympianism was very gradual. Though long despised by educated men, it did not lose its hold on the people all at once. Polytheism—the belief that the world was mercifully and justly governed by a number of gods—was hard to get rid of even when it could not withstand criticism and when it no longer satisfied the moral yearnings of men. Thus for some time yet there were no deserted temples nor any decline in the old State festivals. Olympianism was still able to make conquests even in the fourth century B.C.—even in faraway Carthage. In the next century it got a new lease of life in Rome, where its last chapter was to be written centuries later in the Imperial Age. In these later centuries mothers gave to their babies personal names which show they still believed in the old gods—Apollodorus, "the gift of

Apollo," Hermodorus, the "gift of Hermes," Apollonius, Athenæus, Dionysius and many others. Zeus, Athena and Apollo, the leaders and guardians of the old City-State, were the first of the deities to disappear when their citadels fell. But Athena, though shorn of all civic and political power, was destined for centuries yet to be the Madonna of Athens, and Zeus was still to enjoy his old religious character. Pausanias, who wrote in the second century of our era, probably reflects the religious belief of ordinary men of his day when he says: "All men agree that Zeus reigns in heaven" (ii, 24, 4). The Mainotes of Laconia, dwelling on the rugged slopes of Taygetus, still worshiped some of the Olympians five hundred years after the rest of the Roman Empire had accepted the religion of Jesus, finally becoming Christianized only in the reign of Basil towards the end of the ninth century. It might be added that modern Greek folk-lore still shows indubitable traces of the old polytheism, such as belief in Nereids, Satyrs, Dryads and even the Fates. When a Greek calls the thunder "starry axe" or says "God is raining," he is still unconsciously believing in the powers of the old Sky-god Zeus, as he is in those of Poseidon, when he says, as on the island of Zante, that earthquakes are caused by "God shaking his locks." Such popular ideas have little in common with those of the Christian heaven; for it is as joyless and gloomy a realm to the modern peasant as it was to the men of Homer's day. Coins are still placed in the mouths of the dead in Smyrna and parts of Macedonia. Even Charon himself lives on as Charos, though he is no longer the grim ferryman, but the black angel of death riding a great black horse. Similarly many of the modern festivals are the direct descendants of those of the ancient Greeks.

The dominant note, then, of the latter centuries of Hellenism was personal religion. As the older cults

slowly lost their hold and a craving was born in the individual for an intimate union with deity, a great impulse was given to the old mysteries. Thus in the fourth century the Eleusinia were extended, those of Andania were reorganized, and those of Megalopolis were instituted. In the later centuries foreign ones were added, as those of Samothrace, of Attis, of Isis, of the Great Mother, and finally of Mithra. Some of their ideas passed over into Christianity, such as the saving grace of baptism, the communion with God by a holy sacrament, the mystic death and rebirth of the neophyte. Such rites and beliefs satisfied men's yearning for immortality or absorption in the deity. Sometimes, as in the mysteries of Cybele and Sabazius, the sense of divinity was communicated by the simulation of a holy marriage or sex communion with goddess or god. Mainly for such reasons all these mysteries were indiscriminately condemned by the Church Fathers.

Apart from the mysteries, many brotherhoods—*thiasi*—were formed, devoted to special cults. Secret societies devoted to the Olympian gods had existed in Greece, as we have seen, from early times, but none was instituted for the service of alien deities till the very end of the fifth century. In the Macedonian period we have many inscriptional records of such guilds. They show the development of humanitarian ideas in religion, since foreigners were fully admitted, whereas in the older mysteries only Greeks could be initiates. Thus it was no longer blood relationship which brought men together, but a feeling of fellowship with some god. Such brotherhoods were born of personal religion, and also quickened its progress and became models for the early Christian societies. They bear witness to the fusion of ideas between the West and East, of which Alexander had dreamed; for they were missionaries in the movement which we call *theocrasia*—the blending of the religions of West and

East. This was no new idea of the Hellenistic Age, for Herodotus shows it was natural in the fifth century to interpret foreign gods in terms of Greek, and Euripides had actually commended Cybele as Demeter. But before Alexander's day it was dangerous to introduce foreign cults into Greece. Some few had gotten in about the time of the fifth century, and even earlier Aphrodite's worship at Corinth had become contaminated with the impure ritual of an Oriental cult. But the inevitable was sure to come and Greece, though already rich in gods, became hospitable to the gods of strangers, ultimately receiving them from Egypt, Phœnicia, Syria, Assyria, Persia and Asia Minor. With the new gods alien rituals came and they were open to Greeks and foreigners, to women and slaves. Before the fourth century had passed Athens became alarmed at the invasion. Phryne, the model of Praxiteles, was tried on a charge of affiliating with an alien cult. But the legal barriers were weak and we see the Phrygian Sabazius introduced at the end of the fifth, and the Syrian Aphrodite, the Thracian Cotytto and others in the fourth.

These new worships were generally mystic and consequently were viewed with suspicion and generally condemned, though without reason, as immoral. After Alexander's time things got worse. With the establishment of the kingdoms of his successors, the old gentile barriers of religion broke down completely. The whole later history of paganism is concerned with the gradual influx of Eastern ideas. So far as religion was concerned it was Asia conquering Greece, for Greece was far more open to Oriental influences than Asia was to Hellenic. Some of these princes instituted cults for both Greeks and Orientals. Thus Ptolemy, for political reasons, founded the temple of the god Serapis, who had been worshiped for centuries at Sinope, and who was transported to Alexandria with great ceremony; the Syrian

town of Bambyce was resettled by Seleucus as Hierapolis, the "sacred city"; the personality of Atargatis, a Hittite goddess worshiped in Carchemish and corresponding to the Canaanite Ashtart, became blended with Aphrodite, Artemis and other deities. In later centuries Egyptian, Syrian and Greek gods were fused together by the same sacrifices and ritual formulæ. The name Zeus was finally applied to so many Eastern gods that it quite lost its personal meaning and simply meant "God." Varro, the most learned of the Romans, in the first century B.C. said it made little difference what name was used if the same thing was thereby understood. He looked upon Jahweh and Jupiter as the same god. Thus the *theocrasia* resulted not only in more mysticism, but also in a tendency toward monotheism and helped prepare the way for the advent of Christianity. We owe this great idea of tolerance, then, to the Greeks; it was an idea impossible for the Hebrews to attain. The process of fusion was completed when finally Christianity entered Greece in the wake of these Eastern creeds. Theodosius II ordered the destruction of all temples, like that of the Serapeum, and in 529 A.D. Justinian closed the schools of Athens, the last refuge of Hellenic thought.

Another characteristic of this age of personal religion was the proclaiming of immortality. The initiate into the faith of Osiris, of Attis, of Mithra, was conforted with the promise of a happy future. But the doctrine of immortality taught by the old Orphic sects was the most popular of all. Orphism lasted on into the first century A.D. Its success was due partly to the fact that its god had been Hellenized centuries before, and because its ritual and its divine names—Phanes, Zagreus, etc.—had long been familiar. Furthermore, its picture of the hereafter was Greek in spirit.

One of the most monstrous beliefs which grew to great proportions in this age was the deification of men

living and dead. Germs of this belief are found in the sixth and fifth centuries, when heroic honors were paid to certain great men after death. Though the idea is foreign to Homer—for even Castor and Pollux in the Iliad were merely the mortal brothers of Helen and had died before the Trojan expedition—it may go back to the Mycenæan Greeks, as attendance at the tombs of heroes shows.[5] The first example of it which we have in literature is the apotheosis of Achilles in the *Æthiopis* by Arctinus of Miletus, composed at the close of the eighth century B.C. The first historical example we have of a living man receiving worship is the cult of the Spartan general Lysander on the island of Samos at the end of the fifth century B.C., mentioned by Plutarch. The same writer also says that the Thasians in the next century wished to apotheosize the Spartan King Agesilaus, but that he refused the honor. Later at the end of the fourth century the Athenians attributed divinity to both Alexander and Demetrius Poliorcetes. It was easy for a people accustomed to the idea of man-gods to feel such a conception realized in Alexander. His great power, brilliant personality and incredible conquests put men into the right attitude of mind to worship him. Besides, most of the kings he conquered were looked upon by their subjects as gods, and it was therefore felt that he was no man but a greater god who had destroyed them. His successors were men of similar power; they had huge armies and wealth and could accomplish seemingly impossible things—rebuild by their will cities which had been destroyed by war or earthquake, allay without effort devastating famines, destroy or save by their armies whole provinces. Thus in his lifetime Ptolemy was officially called Soter, "Savior," or Euergetes, "benefactor";

[5] Homer, Il. ii, 550 *seq.*, knew the Attic worship of Erechtheus. This, however, is in the late Catalogue of the Ships.

Seleucus was called Nicator, "Victor," and Antiochus, Epiphanes, the "God Manifest." When we read that Aristotle, the soberest of philosophers, erected an altar to Plato, we have a different phenomenon, for this was no superstitious worship. He did not call his master a god, but merely recognized the divine element in his soul. It is a great mind indeed which makes its divine man out of such material as Plato; it is a far commoner sort which makes gods out of kings and conquerors.

Eastern polydæmonism infected the mystic, theosophical literature of these later centuries. The early Greeks were not believers in good and evil spirits, but we find the later Greeks using exorcisms and conjurations against them. This superstitition has been inherited by the Greeks of to-day. The priests of the Orthodox Church still exorcise "dæmons" at baptisms, which is surely a reminiscence of the beliefs of the Hellenistic Age. We must also not neglect to mention the most curious record of the fusion of later Hellenism with Oriental worship—the so-called Hermetic literature, which Dr. Farnell calls the "most fantastic product of the human mind." It pretends to go back to Hermes Trismegistus, the Greek name of the Egyptian god Thoth, the reputed author of many works on occult science, especially alchemy, theosophy and astrology. These were lost and other books by Alexandrine Neo-Platonists appeared in the second century as a jumble of philosophical and theosophical ideas. The philosophical doctrine of this literature is not, however, earlier than the third century B.C., and most of it is later. The need of a mediator between God and man is constantly felt in these rituals. The formula, "I am Thou and Thou art I," is the key-note of these writings and their spirit is an unnatural fusion of Greek philosophy and Oriental theosophy and magic. It had some influence on Christian metaphysics. Gilbert

Murray happily sums up the influence of this fantastic superstition on Greece by saying that "Astrology fell on the Hellenic mind as a new disease falls upon some remote island people." [6]

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL REFINEMENT OF RELIGION

In concluding this summary sketch of the religious ideas of later Hellenism, it will be interesting very briefly to notice what substitutes philosophy gave after the downfall of Olympianism. Aristotle guides us in our inquiry by stating that the origin of human knowledge of the divine is two-fold—the phenomena of the sky and the phenomena of the soul. Since it was felt that there must be a mind behind the regular motions of the heavenly body, it was easy to regard the sun and moon as divine. This step had already been taken by Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle. If these are divine, then the Earth and the planets and stars as well as the elements, Water, Air, and especially Fire—for Plato affirmed that the gods were made of Fire—must also be divine. Most of the Hellenistic thinkers, then, like Chrysippus, regarded the "Sun and Moon and Stars" as divine, conceiving them as "animate, divine and eternal beings," *i.e.*, as gods. As to the phenomena of the soul, the speculations of philosophers after Plato, with a few notable exceptions like the Roman Stoics, tended away from the outer world to the inner world of the soul. The Stoics made the soul a part of the divine life and taught that the savior of mankind was not the earthly prince, but he who saved men's souls. For he revealed to mortals the knowledge of God—a knowledge which was not merely intellectual in nature, but a complete union. And the method used by

[6] *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 125. I am greatly indebted to his third chapter, "The Failure of Nerve," in my treatment of the Hellenistic Age, as well as for the article by Farnell in Hastings' Dictionary.

all Hellenistic and later thinking in their efforts to make the people understand this knowledge can be summed up, as Gilbert Murray says, in the one word *Allegory*. From the earlier Stoics onward they all apply this method to everything—to Homer, to religious traditions, to rituals and to the world. Thus, at the beginning of the period, Cleanthes looked upon the universe as a great mystic pageant in which the divine Stars were the dancers and the Sun the torch-bearing priest. His pupil, Chrysippus, reduced Homer's Olympians to physical and ethical principles. Finally Sallustius, the contemporary of the emperor Julian in the fourth century of our era, came to look upon the whole world of matter as a great myth.

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In writing the above chapter I wish particularly to express my indebtedness to the works of Fairbanks, J. Harrison (especially the primer), Hogarth, Hall, Murray, Farnell (especially the art. in Hastings' *Dictionary*), and articles in the *Encycl. Brit.*

# CHAPTER XI

## RELIGION OF THE ROMANS

BY GEORGE DEPUE HADZSITS

THE history of the religious experiences of the Roman people falls quite naturally into four epochs which we can distinguish temporally and temperamentally:

(1) The long period, indefinite in time, antecedent to the foundation of Rome, when the ancestors of the Romans were migrating from the Danube Valley and the Northland of Italy and were occupying the plains of Latium to which they were led not by any divine guidance but by instinct, by the laws of Nature and of economic necessity. The mists of this pre-historic period have lifted, and, thanks to the science of the archæologist, the anthropologist and the philologist we can discern with amazing clarity the main outlines of the civilization of a people living in the iron and bronze ages; a belief in magic, a worship of objects and of spirits controlled the consciousness and the conscience of a primitive people who in large measure handed on their own primitive dreads to their descendants, the Romans.

(2) The regal period of Rome, falling traditionally between 754 and 509 B.C., within which there were two moments of special consequence to the evolution of Roman religion, the first of which we associate with the name of the pious King Numa and the second of which was determined by an Etruscan conquest of Rome. The Romans always held the name of Numa in particular reverence. They had already passed from the animistic stage to that of theism and, as far as it has ever been given by Providence to any one man to formulate the religious habits of a people so that these remained—

surveyed in the large—for centuries in the mold in which he had cast them, such was the opportunity, or the mission, as you will, of the statesman who brought out of the chaos of earlier beliefs and practices the cosmic order of a state religion. The Etruscan influence confirmed the earlier, inherent tendency toward organization of ritual but the building of the Etruscan temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline hill with a statue of that God represented the imposition of a new idea upon Roman religious beliefs, of epochal importance in its consequences. This imposing temple, reared on the Capitoline and proudly surveying the future growth of the whole city, became and remained the centre of religious aspirations throughout the 500 years of the Republic; it became the symbol of republican Rome and to our imagination looms as large as the Parthenon in Athens or the Temple at Jerusalem. By the close of the sixth century B.C., the genuine Roman religion, the pure religious expression of the native stock, had almost attained the limit of its growth which in itself was an augury of impending, momentous changes.

(3) In the long stretch of 300 years, following 500 B.C., from 500 to 200 B.C., there came into Roman life a series of national crises with which the old religion was not able to cope; in moments of intense emotional strain the cry went forth for the help of foreign gods and from Greece Rome learned to worship gods in human form, with human virtues and human frailties. The resultant humanization of the Roman gods stripped them of their mystery which had been the essence and the secret of their power. Far from enriching an earlier barren concept of *deus*, plastic and sensuous representations and mythologies of gods merely placed them in a clearer air without increasing their distinction. The old machinery of worship did not break under the strain though admitting of some modifications, and religiosity was still deter-

mined by faithful observance of established ritual. The adoption of the sensational cult of Magna Mater from Asia Minor—near the close of this period—was fraught with gravest peril to the religion of the Roman state which with the year 200 B.C. (approximately) entered upon the last stage of its evolution.

(4) The deep-seated religious distrust and discontent, implied in the establishment of the Great Mother's worship upon the Palatine, the very cradle of Roman life, bore abundant fruit in the next 150 years, when politics corrupted religious institutions and philosophies menaced the very existence of all orthodox faith by their contradictory, rival definitions of that Unknown Power, outside, which man calls God. Civil wars, besides, shook men's faith in man and in government and the cataclysm threatened to engulf the gods who had carried Rome through earlier tragic experiences. There appear upon the horizon the faces of strange gods from the Orient who seemed to satisfy a personal craving and an individual yearning for a closer touch with God.

(5) But when Rome emerged triumphant from her bloody trial, there followed a reaction in favor of the old gods, and the will and the skill of Augustus easily directed a revival of such depth and magnitude as almost to be without a parallel in history. Underneath the turbulent waters of politics and philosophy there had flowed a deeper current of religious trust which had, almost insensibly, brought about an adjustment between the Greek and the Roman religions so that a fusion of these arose in the "Græco-Roman orthodoxy" of the close of the first century B.C. and of the imperial period. There still remained a substratum of genuine Roman beliefs and Numa's genius still presided over Rome in a continuation of ceremonies and of forms of worship as old as Rome herself. Even with new ceremonies and with the organization of the Emperor worship, the idea of formalism remained para-

mount in the state religion. The way to salvation for the primitive Italian, to whom the good will of the gods was a burning question, seemed to lie along the road of ritual, and likewise it was through cult that the imperial Roman thought to save his soul. The extraordinary hold of Roman religion, extending over a space of 1000 years and more, rests as much upon the Roman's practical nature and his essential lack of imagination as upon his respect for state authority and tradition. Through kingship, through republic and through empire the religion of the state survived, never democratic in any real sense, never spiritual in any deep sense. Constantine beheld the sign of the cross in the skies and in 325 A.D. the Nicene creed was adopted, but it was not till 394 A.D. that Theodosius closed the doors of the ancient and venerable temple of Vesta, and forbade the worship of the Lares and the Penates. Some festivals survived for another 100 years and others have remained with change of content to the present time. In its formalism, Catholicism has inherited Rome's greatest legacy to religious history.

As we pause for a moment on the threshold of Roman religion, we become aware of the existence there of a belief in magic, a worship of objects, and of spirits,—a triple inheritance from past ages which a tenacious, religious conservatism of the following centuries never completely disowned throughout the political, social and intellectual development of the Roman people. Many survivals of a primitive age persisted, some with force, some archaic and the targets of fault-finding arrows, some remaining to the eternal enslavement of Roman freedom and the Roman religious nature. Sympathetic magic was at the very root of Roman religion and to the latest days to the minds of the superstitious at the festival of the Carmentalia the spells of the wise women, the Carmentes, assisted at child-birth, while at the Fordicidia

the sacrifice of pregnant cows in the middle of April aided the sprouting seed. To be sure a Cynic of the age of Nero laughed at the folly of the antiquated institution of the *Aquælicium*, but the pontiffs solemnly carried the sacred stone to the Capitoline and prayed to Jupiter for rain until the people were drenched like rats by the responsive rain that fell in bucketfuls. The influence of the early magician must have been almost boundless as we learn from J. G. Frazer, and the perversity of human nature not to recognize the proper relation between cause and effect gave even in historic times power to the Luperci whose magic strips of goat-skin lashed the unoffending backs of hopeful women who placed themselves in the way of priests celebrating holiday in February. The fascination of magic runs through the miraculous tale that is told of the acquisition by the Romans of a shield from the sky which was to be a pledge of Rome's empire. Faunus and Picus were dwellers in a grove at the foot of the Aventine hill and by their incantations brought Jupiter down from his habitation above; Jupiter promised Numa a pledge of empire and on the following day in the presence of a startled people the God thrice thundered without a cloud, thrice darted his lightnings and—behold! a shield, gently poised on the breeze, fell at their feet. To the magician, prayer and propitiation were unknown, but the countless moods of the primitive Italian responded variously to his mysterious environment; failure of magic gave birth to a degree of humility and reverence in the presence of dissociate and uncontrollable phenomena of lightning, thunder, clouds, moaning winds, earthquakes, volcanic disturbances, floods and echoes.

The majesty of the primeval forest inspired a veneration that lived in the worship of the sacred fig tree of the Palatine and the sacred oak of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline. It was near an ancient cypress tree that had

been guarded through many years by the religious awe of his fathers that Æneas appointed a meeting place for his refugees from burning Troy. The worship of boundary stones, too, was never lost even in the later fully developed cult of the god Terminus whose symbol—marking the point at which the properties of two or three owners converged—was holy in the eyes of the country people who had buried fruits of the earth, bones, ashes and blood of a victim where the symbol was firmly fixed in the ground. That worship of animals also existed among the primitive Latins is the belief of Reinach, although Wissowa is equally emphatic that such was not the case. The cult of other natural objects doubtless played a more prominent part in Roman religion than the worship of animals, but all the circumstances of the Latin Festival strongly suggest that in that ancient ceremony on the Alban mountain we have—continued from primitive times to the third century A.D.—a common meal of a sacred victim, a sacrament, a communion on the part of the deputies with the god, the victim and each other. The peculiarly solemn nature of this ceremony on the hills that dominate the whole Latin plain carries us back to the ancient days when cattle were sacred animals, when a pastoral people were groping about for objects upon which to fasten a sentiment, profounder than any secular feeling, until they could conceive the idea of a spirit haunting objects and could transfer the emotion of awe and reverence to the spirit of the thing.

Lucretius was well aware that there was a stage in the evolution of Roman religion when a life, analogous to human life—inspired by a fearful contemplation of incomprehensible phenomena and confirmed by the mysteries of dreams—was attributed to aspects of Nature. The primitive Latin came to feel that his whole world was filled with vague, ill-defined spirits or Powers, invisible and intangible, more potent in the Universe than himself

or his magic. It was a fantastic world in which he lived, a world through which these spirits or hob-goblins danced and with whom he must needs make his peace. These forces were the products of an animistic stage and the significant term of *numina* defined the Will that was theirs. *Numina* lived in the trees, in the springs, in the fields, at the hearth, in the cupboard, at the threshold; they were associated with women and child-birth, with men and procreation, with the crops, with the woodland, with the cattle and the fruits, with the earth and the boundaries of the fields. This polydæmonism was a polytheism in germ, the natural product of a manifold world that was pluralistic in its variety and suggestiveness. In this entanglement of the real and the visionary, fear was a constant element, the real spring as Petronius thought of Roman religious feeling. Virgil caught the dramatic spirit of this situation which he represented as follows:

> E'en then rude hinds the spot revered;
> E'en then the wood, the rock they feared.
> Here in this grove, these wooded steeps,
> Some god unknown his mansion keeps.

The first theology of the ancestors of the Romans consisted in his knowledge of these *numina* and their dwelling places, and his ritual was determined by a need of propitiation and expiation through the performance of proper rites and sacrifices upon the fields and in the home. There must have been constant fear of trespassing upon forbidden territory, of offending or of alienating, and of suffering from wrongs committed wittingly or unwittingly. The whole future history of Roman ritual is an eloquent monument to the ancient, deep emotional disturbance upon which the Roman religion rests. Many *numina* survived to a later age, quite as vague and indefinite as they were at the beginning; so, too, that original impelling and compelling fear manifested itself repeatedly in the most startling ways, constantly revealed

in the pages of Livy's descriptions of innumerable prodigies and expiations. Furrina, a goddess of the state pantheon, who had a priest of her own and a special festival in her honor, remained to the end a vague *numen,* whose nature and functions in Cicero's day were a pure matter of conjecture. We read of a ceremony connected with the worship of the household in historic times that well reflects the early anxiety and scruple that filled the life of the primitive Latin in the midst of the wild forests and in the presence of imposing mountains. Following the birth of a child three gods were thought of as guarding the home against the intrusion by night of the half-wild deity, Silvanus; three men took their places as guards at the threshold and with the symbols of the three protecting divinities the one hews at the threshold with his axe, the second pounds with his pestle, and the third sweeps with his branches or twigs that serve as a broom—all intended to keep away the malevolent *numen,* Silvanus, who never in the later history of Roman religion passed into the higher rank of a real god. The guardian deities, Intercidona, Pilumnus and Deverra, likewise remained shadowy *numina* such as originally had filled the life of the primitive settler before he had even invented names for these spirits, before he had lifted himself out of a life of extreme superstition and uncertainty into a clearer knowledge of gods and a clearer conception of his proper relations with those gods. But gradually through a deeper consciousness and a riper experience gods were evolved out of the *numina,* the regular succession of the seasons inspired festivals, the worship upon the fields and in the home was highly developed, and all of these elements were essential material ready at hand to serve as the basis for Rome's State worship.

Numa might be said to have given Rome her "religious charter," so deep and profound upon the whole subsequent religious history of the city was the influence

of this organization of beliefs and practices on behalf of the State which we associate with the name of the second traditional king whose rule, following the chronology of Livy, fell within the years of 717–674 B.C. Rome had her gods, the gods of the fathers and ancestors of the Romans, who had all the sanction of an ancient, hereditary belief. Rome's gods, whether they became such at the time of Numa or before, represented a selection from the larger number of gods worshiped upon the fields and in the home; these gods of the State were called her *di indigetes*, or native divinities, and although the number of gods whose cults were adopted by the City-State during the centuries that followed, was great, yet the circle of original deities remained for over 500 years a closed circle, held in peculiar veneration. Although a matter of gradual growth, the final elaborate organization of state priesthoods, the incorporation into the body of state-ritual of earlier field and home cults and ceremonials for the divine protection of the corporate life of the community was due—as all Roman tradition had it—to the master mind of a great statesman. Neither seer nor prophet, but a practical Roman, he laid the permanent foundations for the Roman state's *Jus Divinum*, that highly organized legal code defining all the relations between man and his gods. The inherent Roman genius for order and discipline is no less apparent in all of this than a fundamental concept of reasonableness.

The gods of the Roman people, the gods of the City-State, reflect very clearly the great, vital interests of a pastoral and agricultural community which was concerned for the welfare of its cattle, the success of its crops, and the safety of its homes. The practical daily life, the struggle for existence, the strife with rival neighboring settlements are eloquently recorded in the names of divinities who had been closely identified with definite areas and who had presided over the life of their worshipers in

its totality. As gods of the state, they became the protectors and guarantors of that new experiment in civic life upon the banks of the Tiber, destined to such an extraordinary career. At a later time the credit for that miracle of growth and success was given to the gods by an unquestioning people whose firm, deep faith finds expression in the eloquent preface of one of Rome's greatest historians; if it be allowed any people to consecrate its origins and to refer to the gods as their authors, the Roman people are entitled to such a glorification of their success in war.

Representing a stage of evolution from the earlier *numina* of pre-history, these gods were not as yet definitely anthropomorphic, but as mysterious gods they exercised unlimited power within definite domains. There was among these departmental gods a clear and sharp differentiation and specialization of duties and functions, for the ripening grain, the harvest, the woodland and the forest, the flowers, the springs and rivers, the pastures, the mildew, the seed in the ground, the earth, the boundaries of the field, fire, birth and death, the door-way and the hearth were among the spheres within which these divinities exercised their influence. Three gods, however, loomed large and in Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus we recognize a superior and dominating quality that distinguished them above all the rest. Jupiter, the great sky-god of light, of rain and of sunshine, whose favor was so essential for the fields and for the vineyards, who gave dramatic signs of approval or of disapproval through the thunder and the lightnings, was the one god far removed from the immediate environment of man which had given birth to his numerous other divinities. When the gods of the fields and of the home became state divinities, as state gods they assumed the responsibility for the common welfare of all whose life was dependent upon the products of field and stream and who resided within the

City-home within which they themselves had metaphorically taken up their own residence.

Characterized chiefly by a Power which it was natural for the Romans to deify, these gods, "impersonal individualities," knew no plastic representations. The Roman showed little imagination about his gods, and he was as slightly concerned with their personality as he was with attachment of ethical qualities to them. Though nature-gods, there was no personification in any real sense of nature and her forces that we find here. The epithet of *pater* betrays no real sense of the fatherhood of god nor was there any revelation of human relationships between the gods. No fairy tales or mythologies sprang into existence as the expression of a speculative tendency, nor psalms and hymns as the lyrical outburst of religious emotion. There were no further creeds or dogmas except such as defined the *provenance* of these functional deities. Eminently practical, these gods were not the product of soaring phantasies about the stars, the sun and the moon, the storm, the ocean-roar or forest darkness; it was not a yearning of the spirit for the infinite, it was not a lifting of self over the mountains to the skies that suggested the nature of these gods. Least of all was the sublimity of the Hebraic phrase present: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," nor the consciousness of a cosmogony in which the spirit of God moved through the darkness and created light. Yet these gods were sufficient unto the needs of Numa's day as they carried all the responsibilities of a narrow, realistic universe in becoming the divine champions of the City-State. Out of a deep anxiety they had been born, and upon the fields and in the home the flame of a genuine religious feeling burned upon the altars, where the ritualistic fulfillment of religious obligations was scrupulously observed. What degree of sentiment or enthusiasm there existed is beyond our ken. But the state supplemented the poverty of the

god-idea with an elaboration of ritual which reacted upon the worship in the home and which through ceremony cultivated deeper reverence. It was toward the side of ritual, for better or for worse, that Rome threw all her influence; it was toward the side of ritualistic development that her instinct carried her. Through all the subsequent phases of the god-idea, through all the later changes in feeling toward those gods, the machinery of worship grew,—an imposing institution, at times threatening to lull to rest and to smother real religious feeling, but to the end carrying the burden laid upon it. Rome, by the nature of her people, was predestined to a formalism that at the very beginning was antithetic to any spiritualization of her state-religion. More than that, "man's obligatory part in the ritual of the state was absolutely nil," since the state assigned the duties and responsibilities of dealing with the gods of the state on behalf of the state to the properly constituted authorities.

Flamens, augurs, Fetial priests, Vestals, pontiffs, the Luperci, the Salii, the Arval brotherhood,—in part antedating Numa, to be sure,—conducted the state worship at altars, in sacred precincts and in groves. So complete was the organization of these priesthoods whose function it was to communicate with the gods and learn their will, that they almost sufficed throughout the later religious history of Rome which added but very few major priesthoods. Prayers, sacrifices, festivals, solemn *vota* and no less solemn lustrations, dedications of sacred sites, all religious ceremonial exhibited an exact orderliness that remained as the very essence of Roman religion. A characteristic narrative was told of the king Tullus Hostilius, successor of Numa, of whom it was said that afflicted with a fever, he lost his former high spirit of independence and sought to "get religion." Consulting the commentaries of Numa, he became deeply interested in some occult rites to Jupiter Elicius but was struck down by

lightning, by the offended deity, because of some error in the ritual. There lay danger in the slightest infraction of the rules, lest the *pax deorum* might be disturbed. No Brahman or Pharisee was more scrupulous than the ancient Roman with whom the idea of *Pietas* (in its religious sense)—a permanent contribution to Roman religion—came to clear consciousness, synonymous with the due fulfillment of all the details of worship. So strong was this feeling that we know that at least on four occasions the solemnity of the Latin Festival was interrupted because evil omens and oversight in the conduct of the ceremony threatened the validity of the religious performance.

Another striking result is recorded in Quintilian, who writes that in his day the songs of the Salii were scarce understood by the priests themselves, who, however, were obligated to employ the ancient sacred rites, handed down from generation to generation, by a religious feeling which forbade any modernization of those prayers. In the city of the Four Regions of Numa there were sites made over to the gods on the hills and in the valleys at points of significance to the city-life; not that all the divinities had their own sanctuaries, nor that there were temples (in the true sense) erected as yet to any, but incense burned on altars and in the Forum the god of immemorial antiquity, Saturnus, received worship, on the Capitoline there was a shrine for Jupiter Feretrius, on the Palatine the old festival of the Parilia was conducted, Vesta had her rude-covered hut to guard the eternal fire and a gateway sufficed for Janus. First fruits of the fields and of the trees, wreaths, incense, sacrificial cakes, offerings of milk, beans and spelt were the favorite offerings, although animal sacrifices—notably of the pig, sheep and ox—were also doubtless ancient. As characteristic of the simplicity of the early state worship of Numa's day I may quote Ovid's account of the festival of the

Terminalia as it was celebrated in the country districts in his own day; though a few modifications of the ancient country festival appear, in general it maintains the ancient spirit:

"When the night hath passed, let the god who by his landmark divides the fields be worshiped with accustomed honors. O Terminus, whether thou art a stone or a stock sunk deep in the ground, even from the time of the ancients dost thou possess divinity. Thee the two owners of the fields crown with chaplets from their opposite sides; to thee they each present two garlands and two cakes. An altar is erected; to this the peasant country-woman brings on a bit of broken clay fire taken from the warm hearths. An old man cuts up the fire-wood and splitting it piles it on high. . . . While he is arousing the first flames with dried bark, a boy stands by and holds in his hands broad baskets. When he has thrice thrown fruits of the earth out of the baskets into the midst of the flames, his little daughter offers sliced honey-combs. Others hold wine; . . . the crowd all arrayed in white looks on and maintains a religious silence. The common landmark is also sprinkled with the blood of a slain lamb; and the god makes no complaint when a sucking pig is given to him. The simple-minded neighbors meet and celebrate this feast and sing thy praises, O holy Terminus!"

Such is the charming picture that we have, and in the rustic ministrants we see the predecessors of the king, the state flamens and the Vestal virgins. The state was but the household on a larger scale and the king had by analogy there the secular and religious authority of the *pater familias* in his own smaller home. The priests of the state did not become a hierarchical caste but were simply administrative officials with the *pontifex maximus* as their august head, who ultimately was vested with supreme authority in all matters of religion. Never were

the interests of a state, secular and religious, more closely bound together, never were religion and patriotism more completely fused.

This extended account of the religion of Numa as we call it, has been essential in order to be able to follow the more readily the whole subsequent history of Roman religion. The early concept of *deus,* the early original organization of the methods of worship, were the true expression of genuine Roman religion, never completely lost through all of the transformations that time, wider experience, and contacts with other people brought about.

Before the close of the regal period Rome increased her original state pantheon by the adoption of several new gods whose cults had been in previous existence in other towns in Latium and in southern Etruria. Before the close of the century that marked the end of kingship in Rome, the city had become mistress of Latium and this military, political advance had brought about an extension of Rome's economic and social horizon. Trade relations had been established with other communities, a reorganization of the cavalry had been effected, there had developed in the city an artisan class, and Rome had her first experience with the dangerous game of international politics. But this new situation required the friendly cooperation of new gods, because the native gods of Numa could not by any extension of their restricted functions become the patron deities of these new interests. The first adoption of new gods into Rome cannot be ascribed to religious tolerance but must be explained as due to the limitations of the old religious conceptions. There was opportunity for growth for Roman religion from within by the adoption of epithets and through the worship of abstractions, but the polytheism of Rome permitted an expansion by accretions from without and such expansion did no violence to accepted religious principles. On the contrary, the naïveté of this process of accretions from with-

out was in entire harmony with the spirit of the old Roman religion which not only permitted but demanded divine protection over every occupation, over every interest and over all endeavor of life whether individual or public.

From Tibur, therefore, came the cult of Hercules, from Tusculum, the worship of Castor, from Falerii the goddess Minerva, and from Aricia the new divinity, Diana. The arrival of these new-comer gods was attended with no emotional disturbance; Diana was an Italic divinity, Minerva though subject to Etruscan influences in Falerii was in origin Italic, while Hercules and Castor —though in origin Greek—had become so thoroughly Latinized in Tibur and Tusculum that Rome regarded them as native and established their altars within the sacred line of the *pomerium,* that inviolate boundary line between native and foreign religious ideas. There was something of kinship between these new divinities and the family of older gods, and accidental considerations resulted in the establishment of Diana's and Minerva's cults on the Aventine outside the pomerium. Later Roman traditions played fast and loose with the facts of these adoptions; Castor and Pollux, for example, were represented in legend—as we read in Dionysius of Halicarnassus—as having led the Romans to victory at the battle of Lake Regillus early in the republican period; after the battle, these two splendid gods, in shining armor, fair to behold and of imposing stature, appeared in the Roman Forum where at the Spring of Juturna they announced the Roman victory, disappearing as miraculously as they had appeared to the astonished Roman gaze; legend found no trouble in crediting their actual observation by mortal eyes and pointed to the handsome temple of the 5th century as evidence for the incredulous of their arrival at that time. Castor, however, in point of fact came to Rome with the reorganization of the cavalry in the time of Servius Tullius galloping in on horse-back,

as it were, to become the patron saint of the knights. Rome did not at random officially accept all Latin cults, but permitted the private worship of many deities not incorporated within her state pantheon. But in the case of Castor, not satisfied with the preparedness visible in her armed horsemen, she needs must have besides the divine sanction of an invisible god for her ambitions. To Diana there was built a *temple* on the Aventine, as the common sanctuary of all the Latins. But the significance of the cult of Diana lies rather in the *temple* structure which contained a *statue,* for this departure meant a great break with older traditions.

This break was intensified by the erection of the Etruscan temple on the Capitoline to the new triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva; this temple also held a sensuous representation of a god, Jupiter Optimus Maximus. At the very moment that Rome was triumphant, politically, her older concept of god was on the point of vanishing. Rome was on the threshold of that career of conquest by which she in time gained the whole world, but unconsciously she was in danger of losing her own soul with a surrender of her old-time gods and her former simplicities of worship. The Etruscan domination that came to a political end with the inauguration of a republic, persisted in the influence of the temple which paradoxically rose serene on the Capitol as the very centre of public worship and the centre of republican aspirations. The inevitable revolution in religious thought came in due season.

Rome had established a precedent in the inauguration of the cults of Hercules, Castor, Minerva and Diana that made the adoption of Greek cults during the next period, from *circa* 500 to 200 B.C., seem a logical step. The Sibylline books, which had arrived in Rome early in the republican period and were cherished in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, were responsible for the

seemingly harmless, apparently analogous adoption of the worship of Greek divinities, Apollo, Demeter, Hermes, Poseidon, Asclepios, Pluto and Persephone. Real crises, such as a grain famine, the need of carrying grain across the seas, pestilence, and destruction of a part of the city-wall by lightning were the sufficient causes for consulting this new body of religious prescriptions to meet the ills for which the old gods—in the nature of things—could not furnish the remedy. This did not necessarily carry with it loss of confidence in older divinities within their anciently defined spheres, but was equivalent to increasing the state's total of insurance through payment of premiums in the form of gifts and sacrifices to the newly accepted divine protectors.

But the influence of the Greek concept of *anthropomorphic* deities spread insidiously throughout the whole structure of Roman religious beliefs so that in the course of three hundred years the rank growth that had grown from the seed, arresting the power of an independent native growth, all but choked the earlier conception of a mysterious power working in the world. That transformation of the old Roman god-idea through mythologies —partly creditable, but in equal part, discreditable— through statues which as Varro recognized took away fear of god, and finally through the *Græcus ritus,* spared only a few of the native gods; in time the Greek epidemic developed a feverish passion for identifying the old with the new (sometimes on the basis of similarities but often on the most arbitrary basis) and for merging the Italic gods in the more human but less mysterious Greek divinities. The æsthetic and spiritual values of anthropomorphic deity were lost upon the Roman in large degree before 200 B.C.; Rome introduced Greek *lectisternia* and *supplicationes,* even while forgetting the native invisible *numen,* who had worked with force in a particular department of human life and who had represented a nobler

conception and for the Roman a far more effective conception of divinity. In 399 B.C., in pursuance of the directions of the Sibylline books, a Greek *lectisternium* was for the first time conducted in Rome; images of gods and goddesses in human form reclined on their couches and appeared to partake of dinner, in human need of food and drink. What made this doubly significant was that the Senate had recourse to this device for bringing to an end a pestilence, admitting thereby the insufficiency of the old cults, of old native forms of prayer and sacrifice. In 217 B.C. a *lectisternium* on a grand scale was conducted, and it was a virtual "turning point in the religious history of Rome," for at six couches twelve great gods were seen with no distinction between native gods and Greek divinities; the twelve gods thereafter were the central figures of the Græco-Roman pantheon which resulted from this contact between Greece and Rome. Long before Rome conquered Greece politically Greece had completed the conquest of Rome religiously—a phenomenon second in importance only to the astounding religious revival of Augustus' day. But so completely lost in Greek gods were the Roman, that Roman scholarship of the first century B.C. had the utmost difficulty in distinguishing the original outlines and qualities.

This abandonment of the old theology, which necessarily involved the disappearance of many of the old cults, was hastened by the events of the Second Punic War during which prodigies of an unparalleled and terrifying nature were reported from all over Italy. The dreariness of war, protracted almost through the entire third century, with the Samnites, with Pyrrhus and with the Carthaginians, resulted in religious depression and shook the foundations of the entire structure of organized worship. Ships were seen in the skies, a temple of Hope was struck by lightning, divination tablets shrunk, statues and shields sweated blood, bloody ears of grain fell into

reapers' baskets, armed forces were seen storming the Janiculum, and in terror, in bewildered uncertainty as to where God might be or what his true nature was, the Roman state found its chief religious consolation in the foreign books of oracles resting in Jupiter's great temple. Most extraordinary offerings were made to the gods, a *ver sacrum* was declared and human sacrifices of Greeks and Gauls were made. The hysteria grew and the Roman rites fell into disuse, not only in private but in public also; in the Forum and on the Capitol crowds of women sacrificed according to new rites and prayed to the gods in modes new to Rome. This rebellion against the religion of the state was stayed by the defeat and death of Hasdrubal, when finally the shadows seemed dispelled from Latium. The Senate expressed its joy through the medium of a Greek ceremony, a supplication, and the people's confidence in their gods was temporarily restored by this success while thanksgivings were offered to their "immortal" gods—Græco-Roman gods to be sure, but gods, none the less, who seemed to have saved the state.

But the arch-enemy, whom Rome accused of having no fear of the gods, no religious scruples, who had swept through the Italian cities like a flame through the pine forests, remained in Italy in defiance, as it were, of the gods in whom Rome still placed her trust. Finally, it was the Sibylline books, again, that declared that the foreign foe could be driven from Italy only if the Idæan Mother were brought from Pessinus to Rome. With the adoption of the worship of the Phrygian goddess, Magna Mater, in 204 B.C., the last chapter was written in the religious drama of Rome of these three hundred years between 500–200 B.C. With the expulsion of Hannibal, Rome's supremacy in Italy was undisputed but not only had she in the interim lost her own religion but by receiving Cybele within the pomerium she effaced all distinctions between the Græco-Roman deities and foreign

gods, who were now free to settle upon her soil. With great state and ceremony, in which equites, senators, plebs, mothers, daughters, Vestals took part, the stranger divinity was hailed with gladness and the image of a sacred stone conveyed with pomp into the temple of Victory. The very antithesis of the sobriety of Roman ritual, the ecstatic ceremony of mutilated priests of Magna Mater found a welcome in Rome which thus practically became the worthy retreat of every divinity. The mockery of this rejoicing was unconsciously rendered complete by a celebration of another *lectisternium*, that opiate which Rome had come to find so indispensable.

As we come to the next period in Roman religious history, 200 B.C. to Augustus, we find a condition of religious unrest which must have been fatal had there not been a saving element of genuine religious feeling that flowed as a deep stream underneath the surface phenomena. The gods had become so humanized that they were upon a low level of humanity while the acceptance of the exotic cult of the Great Mother into the body of Roman religious organization afforded only a temporary relief. The religion of the state was at its lowest ebb of meaning, influence and inspiration. It gained no new informing spirit to illumine or to exalt the accepted Græco-Roman conception of gods; the old notion of religious obligations was enshrined in ceremonies that became fossilized, while priesthoods were involved in the degradation of base politics. Temples fell into ruin, priesthoods were vacant for years, a debauchee was elected (209 B.C.) *flamen Dialis* in order that the taboos restricting the life of that great priest might lead to his reformation; the story of Cato is well known that he marveled how one *haruspex* upon meeting another could refrain from scornful, ironical laughter. The pontiffs had neglected the calendar to the mischief of the festivals. Varro feared the old Roman religion would perish through

neglect; Sallust satirically contrasted the men of his own day with their ancestors, *religiosissumi mortales.* With unerring accuracy the stage attacked two fundamental defects: the metamorphosis of the Roman gods into divinities with human frailties did not escape the cleverness of the comic poet, who did not shrink from representing the amours of Jupiter upon the stage; equally *blasé* was the tragedy that openly proclaimed the indifference of the gods to the fate of mankind.

Such degradation of the gods and denial of their power left to the orthodox-minded after 200 B.C. who inherited the evil consequences of the previous period, little comfort. He had the refuge of his home with its cults where religion "had placed a certain consecration upon the simple life of the family," and during the following 150 years the household cults escaped the corrupting influence of ridicule and of indifference. But the state maintained its soul-less machinery of worship all the time it was advancing beyond the seas to Mediterranean empire; and all the power of the state was back of traditional forms of worship that seemed to the unimaginative Roman the very essence of religion. But emotional, spiritual and intellectual rebellions manifested themselves in Dionysiac orgies, in Pythagoreanism, in Stoicism and Epicureanism and in the private worship of gods from the Orient. The dignity of Roman ceremonials could not satisfy the deeper craving for emotional worship, the sincerer yearning to know the truth about God and the desire to be in closer communion with him. Constraint of habit prevented the state from seizing opportunities that existed for its own spiritual reformation.

Stoic and Epicurean philosophies of religion breathed a freer spirit, bound neither by the scruple of cult nor by fear of the gods. Each had rediscovered God—one in the eternal fire, the other in the remote intermundia. The state religion might have been illumined by adoption of

the Stoic concept of Fate, and from Stoicism the state theology might have acquired a profounder understanding of Providence. With all of the bitter Epicurean denunciation of the old conception of providential divine regard, the Epicurean theory of god had the power, though not the opportunity, of purging the old polytheism of its unworthy mythologies and of raising the Græco-Roman gods to a more exalted level. A pontifex maximus had declared it expedient to deceive the masses because the truth of philosophic speculation was harmful—which meant that it was dangerous for the organized systems of worship. Thus, because of the self-sufficiency of the state institution, there was but little reaction upon the religion of the state from these philosophies of religion. Philosophic speculation did not release man from the necessity of remaining a conformist in worship; while mental reservations made such external conformity a possibility, the drama of salvation was enacted only in individual souls and the magnificent state machinery of religion remained an imposing institution placed above the laws of reason.

It was the strict and ceremonious observation of all of the minutiæ of worship that made up the background of this period of unrest, during which the state maintained all the traditions of the letter with no regard to the decline in faith. In the absence of the spirit that had originally prompted and animated the ceremonials, the inheritance of a multiplication of formulæ and of an elaboration of prayers hardly contributed to the vitality of those ceremonies. The *votum,* a contract between man and god, and implying the strongest belief in divinity, cast in legal mold, lost its validity in an age of skepticism and distrust. *Lustrationes,* which once had restored the disturbed equilibrium between men and gods and reëstablished the *pax deorum,* became a spectacle for the eye without appealing to the heart. The sunrise offering of

fruits and incense, the wearing of wreaths of grain, the solemn "procession of victims . . . round the fields, driven by a garlanded crowd, carrying olive branches and chanting" retained for the Ambarvalia, at best, a sentiment of affection. Sacrifices, whether honorific, piacular or sacramental became a sham, with a decline in belief in the providential regard of the gods—and the characteristically Roman scrupulous care exercised at sacrifices could not save such ceremonies from debasement; there were the strictest regulations concerning the sex, age and color of the victim, the dress and veiled head of the priests, the silence of the bystanders—all of which were significant in an age of belief, but equally a delusion in a time that was threatened with a collapse of old beliefs. Such an age hardly required the services of the *Indigitamenta* or pontiffs' artificially elaborated lists of the names of the gods and methods of properly addressing them. These books grew originally out of the "old national belief in the ubiquity of a world of spirits," but were out of harmony with an age that required simplicity rather than over-development of ritual. Varro had, to the amusement of St. Augustine, enumerated the gods who watched over man's life in all its details from the time of conception to the time of death.

The age was out of sympathy, too, with the multiplicity of prayers that previous conditions had required. These showed little desire to conform one's life to the will of the gods and had been offered for material rather than for moral blessings. The mumbling of prayers by priests who performed their state function in religion purely through ritual, was the final touch revealing the paradoxical betrayal of real religious feeling into the possession of ceremonial and cult. Lucretius had eloquently protested that piety did not consist in being often seen with veiled head turning to a stone, approaching every altar, falling prostrate on the ground, spreading

out the palms before the shrines of the gods, sprinkling the altars with much blood of beasts and linking vow to vow, but so deeply fixed was this belief in the state ritual that it survived this period of tribulation and in the time of Augustus piety was once more defined in the old terms of right performance rather than by any new concept of the right spirit. Even the enlightened Cicero, "although he could not believe in the old theology, put the *jus divinum* in the forefront," and boasted of Rome's superiority in religion, *i.e.*, the cult of the gods.

But even during the time of apparent disintegration, ritual had carried along the burden of religion and insensibly forces had been at work that resulted in the salvation of the Græco-Roman gods. The Greek gods had arrived in Rome at the time of their decadence, and the uncultured Roman could appreciate only the baser qualities of that theology. As Rome, herself, however, became tutored in the finer arts and feelings, through the processes of Greek education, the Olympian gods once more became brilliant deities to the imagination of the orthodox. The deplorable loss of faith of the preceding period was followed by a revival under Augustus. The glowing poetry of the period represents these human Græco-Roman gods, even with their humanity, far above the level of man, exalted and truly divine—gods in whose living presence there was actual, deep belief and to whom prayer could rise with the spontaneity of an unquestioning veneration. Contemporary poetry thrills with a recovery of the conviction in the immortality of the gods—and from the beginning Jupiter had known of Rome's greatness, at length about to be realized. "Protect us by thy might, Great God our King," expresses a sentiment that trembled upon pagan lips and came from pagan hearts which believed in an omnipotent father who from azure heights gazed calmly down upon his chosen people and in whose justice their destinies were

safe. Jupiter came as near to infinity as it was possible for a finite, nature god to come. The academic debate of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* is far removed from Virgil's passionate belief in a divine sanction assured the state and pales in the glow of enthusiasm that resulted under Augustus of a revival of many old priesthoods, a rebuilding of many temples and a revitalization of ritual more ornate than ever before.

The gods whose neglect had brought many a woe upon Hesperia in her sorrow, were now duly worshiped by augurs, quindecemviri, Vestals and pontiffs, while in the home the domestic cults of Vesta and of the Penates were renewed with deeper confidence. The continuance of morning prayers and of libations to household deities at meals had kept the flame of religious belief alive during all the storm and stress of state affairs. The intimately beloved Faunus of the fields along with goat-footed Satyrs and nymphs occupied his haunts to the delight of rustics, when Pan shook the piny covering of his semi-savage head as he raced over the reeds with his sensuously curved lips in order not to cease his woodland melody—all, in spite of Lucretius' skepticism and Plutarch's elegy. Festivals proceeded more orderly with Cæsar's correction of the calendar and even in the "light artistic half-belief" of the poet from Sulmo we can readily read the sanctification of patriotism for which Augustus was striving.

The "Father of his country" directed the stream of religious belief in channels of devotion to the new empire, by a rededication of the Arval brotherhood to the imperial cult, by a conspicuous favoritism for the cult of Mars the Avenger, for the cult of the deified Cæsar and of the Palatine Apollo. The festival of the Parilia—maintaining an unbroken contact with the days of Rome's beginnings—the Secular games, celebrated with unparalleled splendor and charged with a new spirit,

fortified the patriotism of the new era. This patriotism had come out of the travail of a hundred years and saw its justification in blessings of secure peace.

But there was impending a new cult that presently cast its ominous shadow over these auspicious days. Out of the 500 years' acquaintance with gods, human in aspect though not mortal, Rome finally came to take the step that Greece had taken before, of deifying man; from the worship of god-men the step was easy to the adoration of the man-god. Ennius had 200 years before translated that baneful romance of Euhemerus which had taught the mortal origin of all gods, and Emperor worship became a conspicuous centre of all state religious ceremonies. Though there eventuated the cult of *Roma Aeterna,* rich with possibilities, the days for the worship of abstractions had long since passed, and marble temples and imposing ceremonies could not guarantee life to cults that failed to correspond to a growing yearning for a more personal contact with God.

The earlier deification of such abstractions as Honor, Virtue, Concord, Faith, had given a religious sanction to these moralities but redemption of Roman society, private or public, had not been secured thereby—either in the first century B.C., as is abundantly testified by Lucretius, Sallust and Cicero, or in the first century A.D., as Juvenal knew only too well. It had not at an earlier time prevented the breaking of a treaty with Tarentum nor had it mitigated the horrors of the Civil War. Horace had indulged the vain hope that these cults had borne permanent fruitage in the hearts of men, but all Roman cult had the fatal defect of not inspiring an individual sense of right or wrong. "The Inside of the Cup" had to be purged as Lucretius ardently exclaimed but this reforming principle found no entrance into the circle of Roman religious ideas. Cicero believed *pietas* and *justitia* to be complementary; the binding force of the oath in

social and political life was strong; the disciplinary value of ritual was great and the sense of responsibility it cultivated was an important contribution to *virtus,* but neither humility nor a contrite spirit were characteristic products of the Roman's relations with his gods. The vain regrets over the disappearance of the old simplicities of worship far outweighed in Roman consciousness any sting of remorse over the real secret of the failure of Roman cult and ritual. Cicero's lament that no one prayed to the gods for *virtus* did not recall Roman religion to its own reformation. St. Augustine's observation that the pagan Roman did not pray for immortality called attention to another shortcoming that an age given more and more to otherworldliness could not condone. It was not in religion that the orthodox Roman sought abiding peace; the comfort and the solace that the world craved in the first and second centuries A.D. were not there.

Cult had carried Roman religion along the stream of time but the insufficiency of its content was not concealed by the rich cloak that the Roman state wrapped about it. Rome had become more and more resplendent in the empire period with glittering temples of marble but all the externals of cult could not satisfy the growing spiritual yearning for a deeper and more personal knowledge of God and for a greater sanctity of life. Stoicism, Pythagoreanism, Mithraism and Christianity were all better equipped to meet the human need. Roman religion could not affect any real synthesis of these variously ideal systems with itself; her own tolerance of a variety of religious beliefs was conditioned by a conformity in worship—an impossible barrier for Christianity—yet one inevitably set up by a state that had finally come to Emperor worship and State worship as the final expression of its religious aspiration. To the end, cult, the real expression of the Roman genius, was in the fore-front of Roman

religion; the inherent binding quality of *religio,* manifest in ritual, had long ago cramped Rome's religious imagination; it now abstracted all real liberty from Rome's vision of religious duties that must needs remain subservient to the state. With the inability of the cult to carry the new triumphant ideas, the gods of Rome faded in the twilight of unbelief and the paganism of the Eternal City became as a tale that is told.

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# CHAPTER XII

## THE RELIGION OF THE TEUTONS

BY AMANDUS JOHNSON

THE purpose of this brief sketch is to outline the main features of the religion of the primitive Germanic peoples, as it appears (from available sources) in the first centuries of our era, not to reconstruct earlier forms nor to discuss individual theories of origin or possible lines of development.

By religion I here mean man's total conceptions of the world beyond his material environment and material self, in other words, "man's attitude towards the unknown," not necessarily including a spiritual relation with a higher power. Under this head (of religion) will fall two divisions, *mythology* and *theology*.

*Mythology* (without any reference to the popular meaning as to the truth or untruth of the conceptions in question) includes: (1) the theory and history of creation (*cosmogony*); (2) the arrangement, order and management of the world (*cosmology*); (3) the transmigration of souls, the life after this, the end of the world and final judgment (*eschatology*). Theology on the other hand—possible of application only in higher forms of religion—includes: (1) the theory of man's relation to the gods and indirectly his relation to his fellow-man, in other words, cult, rites, ethics (sacrifices, prayers, manner of life, etc.); (2) and, in the case of highly civilized peoples, a systematic or philosophical arrangement of religious conceptions (this being absent in primitive religions is found only to a limited extent in Scandinavian Religion, the so-called Norse Mythology, as presented in the Edda).

A kind of dualism permeates Teutonic religion. Life or spirit and matter were coëxisting and eternal; there were two elements, fire and water; two conditions or states, heat and cold; two kinds of good powers or gods, the *Vanir* and *Acsir* (the gods proper); two kinds of evil powers, the *Thursar* and the *Jötnar* (the giants proper), etc.,—other examples will appear in the following paragraphs.

No other primitive religion is so logical and consequential in its development along its basic idea, and as we shall see, is singularly in accord with modern scientific thought in its fundamental conception about the origin of the universe, namely the reaction of heat and cold.

As in the case of many other religions, several ages or periods can be distinguished: (1) the age of chaos, (2) the first period of creation with the age of bliss, (3) the second period of creation or the age of growth and development, (4) and finally the destruction and the new age.

The religion sprang from the soul of the people, was an outgrowth of their "inner life" and reflects their longing for spiritual and mystic communion with nature and "the supernatural world." In their religion we thus have a key to their nature; a mirror of their inmost self. It is therefore an interesting and important product that cannot be neglected by any student of the civilization of England, of Germany or of the Scandinavian countries (and, shall I say, of the United States of America, the civilization of which is largely a child of the above-mentioned nations?).[1]

The cosmic conceptions of the early Teutons were briefly as follows: Before "the morning of time" "there was neither sand nor lake nor cool billows; there was

[1] The writer, some years ago an adherent of what might be called the "wanderlust" theory, championed by many scholars of the last century and of today, is now firmly convinced of the tenability of the "spontaneous theory."

neither earth nor lofty heaven." But there was a gaping or yawning abyss called *Ginnungagap* on opposite sides of which, to the north and south, were two worlds, *Muspellsheim* (the home of heat) and *Niflheim* (the home of mist or cold). In the midst of the latter was the great spring *Hvergelmir* (the noisy kettle), whence flowed twelve streams (*Elivagar*) southward towards *Ginnungagap*. On their course through the regions of eternal cold the waters of these streams froze and during unnumbered ages layer was added to layer. But the forces of heat were also at work in the world of fire. Sparks thence never ceased flying and with increasing size and power they crossed the abyss and fell on the ice fields of southern *Niflheim*. The ice began to melt and the water to drip. The spirit, which was embedded in the ice and which gave it a salty taste, was liberated. The result was a living being *Ymir*, the first of the giants and of living things (the evil power thus being earlier than the good). A cow, Authhumbla, also sprang into life from the contact of heat and cold and from her milk Ymir obtained his nourishment.

The cow, on the other hand, lived from the salty ice-blocks which she licked. Thereby other creative forces came into operation. The purer spirit in the hardened element was set free. On the first day of Authhumbla's licking a man's hair came out of the ice, the second day a man's head and, in the evening of the third day, a complete man stood forth, strong, large and handsome, the father of the gods, Buri by name.

In the meantime the giant race began to multiply. During a heavy sleep Ymir fell into a sweat. A man and woman grew under his left arm and his feet brought forth a son. The giants increased rapidly and furnished a wife to Buri, who had three sons from his marriage, Othen (Wodan), Hönir, Lothur. Wodan was the first-born and became the father of all other gods.

With the advent of the gods creation proper began. They killed Ymir, threw his immense body into the abyss which was completely filled, and created the world there. The events are described thus in the *Edda:*

> From Ymir's giant flesh
> The earth was made;
> The billows [the seas and all the waters] from his blood,
> The mountains from his bones,
> The bushes from his hair,
> And the heaven from his skull;
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> But of his brains
> All terrible clouds in the sky
> Were made.

The earth was round and completely encircled by the mighty oceans. Four dwarfs, north, south, east, west, were directed by the gods to support the skull and keep it in place above the world.

Then the gods assigned courses to the heavenly bodies, which were originally sparks flying irregularly through space from Muspellsheim. In this manner night and day were established and the two seasons, summer and winter, were determined and conditioned. Grass began to grow and the earth to prosper and bring forth fruit. At the horizon in the far north was placed a large giant in the shape of an eagle. Every time he flapped his huge wings the wind blew over the world. The gods selected the middle of the world for themselves and called it *Asgarth* (the home of the *Aesir,* Gods). Between earth and Asgarth they spanned a wonderful seven-colored bridge, Bifrost,—mortals call it the rainbow.

When the world thus had been made habitable, the gods assembled on a plain in Asgarth, took counsel, made dwellings for themselves and constructed all kinds of necessary things. This finished the first period of creation and now followed the golden age or "millennium,"

when happiness and bliss were the daily companions of the immortals.

But the happiness came to an end, a disturbing element arrived among the gods. When Ymir fell the giants were all drowned in his blood, except Bergelmir, who escaped with his wife in a skiff, thus keeping alive the race of giants. From these, says the *Edda,*

> Came to the High Ones,
> Three mighty Giantesses [the Nornir, fates],
> The one is called Urth,
> The other Verthandi,
> The third Skuld.
> The lots of fortune,
> Life and death,
> The fate of heroes,—
> Everything comes from them.

With the arrival of the Norns or Fates the second period of creation began. The activities of the gods were now directed to definite purposes and aims and their lives and energies were divided between a constant struggle against the powers of darkness (the giants) and the maintenance of the world organization.

> Then the mighty ones,
> The holy gods,
> Went to their judgment seats
> To take counsel.

As they were insufficient unto themselves and in need of aid they gave human form and understanding to the *Dvergar* (dwarfs), who came into existence at the death of Ymir. The dwarfs (sometimes called black-elves in contrast to the elves proper) were skillful workers, especially in metals, and many of the treasures in Asgarth were of their manufacture. Later they also became friendly to man and often contributed to his happiness. The dwarfs were small and swarthy, lived under the earth and were really "children of darkness," although their labors were for the benefit of gods and men.

In somewhat of a contrast to them stood the *elves,* "airy and light," and their home was in the air. Like the dwarfs they were propitious to the inhabitants of the earth and of Asgarth.

One day after the creation of the dwarfs and elves,

> Three gods,
> Mighty and benevolent,
> Went to Midgarth,
> Found on the ground
> Powerless
> Ask [ash] and Embla [elm]
> Without destiny.
> They possessed neither soul
> Nor understanding,
> Neither blood nor motion
> Nor a blooming complexion.
> Othen [Wodan] gave them the spirit,
> Hönir, understanding,
> Lothur gave them blood [life]
> And a rosy complexion.
>
> Thereupon the mighty ones,
> The holy gods, again,
> Went to their judgment seats
> To take counsel.

The universe was now divided into nine districts or worlds, in which the various living beings were to reside. The upper part of the world the gods had already appropriated for themselves and in the centre of the earth they prepared a home for man, *Mithgarth* (middle home). The giants were assigned to the regions of the open sea and the mountains, these places being called *Jötunheim* (home of giants) or *Utgarth* (the outer dwelling). A great stream divided *Jötunheim* and *Asgarth.* Says the *Edda:*

> Iſing [doubt] is called the stream,
> Which forever divides
> The home of giants and of gods.
> It shall run on
> Through all eternity.
> Never ice will form upon it.

This stream undoubtedly refers to the air.

The interior of the earth, as we have seen, was the home of the dwarfs, *Dvergaheim* or *Svartalfheim* (the home of the black elves), and the space in the air immediately above the earth was designated as *Alfheim* (the home of the elves). The other worlds were: *Vanaheim* near the seashore; *Muspellsheim* (already mentioned was the upper heaven); *Helheim* (home of Hel, the goddess of death, a portion of *Niflheim*); and *Niflheim* (the home of cold and mist).

A curious conception, obscure as to its origin and difficult to explain, was the tree Yggdrasil (probably Wodan's horse). It finally came to represent the universe and with its destruction the world would come to an end. Its branches spread over the whole earth and reached up to heaven. It drew nourishment from three roots, one leading to the spring *Hvergelmir* in Niflheim (or home of mists), the other to the fountain of Mimer, in Jötunheim and the third to the spring of Urth (*Urthar-brunn*), in Asgarth. At Urth's spring the gods assembled daily for consultation and the pure clear waters from this fountain gave life and growth to the tree; but at the fountain in Niflheim the dragon Nithhögg (hate-cut) gnawed at its root.

Another conception that has given rise to much discussion was the world snake (*Mithgarthsorm*), thrown by Wodan into the sea, where it grew until it finally encircled the earth and bit its tail. It has been stated that the world-snake idea was an eastern importation adopted by the Norsemen. However, the snake cult is of such universal occurrence as to suggest individual origin and development among many primitive tribes. The snake or serpent must have been of peculiar interest to early man and certainly aroused his curiosity and wonder. It is different from all other animals and propels itself without feet equally well on land and on water. The smaller species known in Scandinavia can

appear as from nowhere and disappear quickly in holes and crevices, thus baffling its pursuers.

The notion of a monstrously large snake inhabiting the waters and encircling the earth could easily have developed in Sweden. On Lake Vettern the waves in connection with a peculiar light combination at a certain time of the year have often caused people to think that they see a tremendous serpent coiling its gigantic form across the water, and the tales from trustworthy sources puzzled the scientists until the natural phenomenon was explained. The tales of the "sea-serpent" or of a great sea monster are so numerous in early Scandinavian literature and in modern tradition, that the idea must have been of native conception. Olaus Magnus in his *History* (1555), 21:24, describes the monster as being 200 feet long and about 6½ feet in diameter. "It even disturbs ships," he says, "rising up like a mast and sometimes snaps some of the men from the deck."

As time went on the Aesir or gods increased by birth and by adoption from the Vanir and the giants. In Scandinavian religion they were twelve (although fourteen are also mentioned) with the same number of goddesses. The number among the other Germanic peoples is uncertain and only a few of the divinities can be ascribed as common to all the early Teutons, among them being Wodan, Thor and Tyr.

These Teuton gods were all-powerful, but they were not in themselves omnipotent, for they were limited to time and space and subject to the dictates of the Norns (Fates), the hammer of Thor was essential to the safety of Asgarth, and the eight-footed horse of Othen (Wodan) was a necessary agent for swift transition from place to place; they were "all-wise," but they were not in themselves omniscient, for a drink in Miner's fountain of wisdom was required by Wodan and two ravens brought him news of all human and world events; they

were not "all-good," for they were partly of giant origin and hence carried the germ of evil in their souls; measured by the short span of human lives, they were eternal as they lived on for innumerable ages, but they were not immortal, for their power was destroyed in *Ragnarök* and the majority went under in that catastrophe.

The chief divinity was Wodan (Othen). He was the first-born, the "all-father," the special friend of man, the incarnation of wisdom and the protector and ruler of the universe. He was the inventor of runes, and the originator of poetry; he inspired the skalds and taught man the art of letters. Wodan was one-eyed. He desired to drink from the spring of wisdom, guarded by Miner; but this he could do only by giving away one eye. He was thought of as tall and stately, with a grave countenance, aged and bearded. On his arm hung a heavy gold ring, *draupnir* (dripping); in battle or on his journeys he wore "a mantle of blue and a helmet of gold" and in his right hand he carried the wondrous spear, *gungnir*. From him we have Wednesday, Wodan's day. Two wolves lay at his feet and two ravens, Hugin (thought) and Muninn (longing), sat on his shoulders. The ravens "flew out over the world every morning" and returned with news to their master and thus Wodan knew what mortals did. His horse Sleipnir (slippery), on which he rushed through the air, was the noblest and swiftest of animals, with eight legs and with runes on his teeth.

Wodan was thrice married. His first wife was Jörth (the earth), who became the mother of Thor, the eldest son of Wodan and the strongest inhabitant of Asgarth. Frigg was his second and most important wife. "Nine maids waited upon her and three others were at her service." "She knows the destiny of all beings, although she never talks of such things herself." She was the goddess of motherly love, the protector of marriage and

the guardian of women and their domestic duties. Friday is called after her and she was highly honored, especially in Sweden. Her nine maids were engaged in nine occupations in which she took interest and which she supervised and regarded as her own. Thus Sjöfn lighted the flame of love in human breasts; Var guarded over the promises and oaths given by men and women and punished all those who broke their troths. Rindr, who was white as the sun, became Wodan's third wife, and only with great difficulty did he win her.

The wives of Wodan apparently represented the earth in various aspects and thus seem to indicate that Wodan was originally a sun or sky god. Jörth (earth) was the uncultivated earth in its primitive state, Frigg denoted the cultivated fruitful earth, and Rindr represented the earth in the frozen wintry condition of the north, before the spring sun had softened her hardened surface.

The most beloved of the gods, especially in Scandinavia, was Thor, the thunderer, after whom Thursday was named. He was broad-shouldered and tall, red-haired and fierce-eyed. He possessed three treasures of inestimable worth: the hammer Mjölnir (the crusher), a pair of iron gloves, always worn in battle, and a belt which redoubled his tremendous power, every time he buckled it on. As a rule he was gentle, kind-hearted and peaceful. But, when his anger was aroused, he grew fierce and terrible and his eyes flamed like bolts of thunder. He was the synonym of openness and the incarnation of truth, "the god who never uttered a falsehood." His hammer was the symbol of faithfulness, the sign of the hammer (really a cross) was a protection against all evil things. He was the impersonation of strength, the undaunted defender of gods and men against evil powers. The cultivators of the soil called for his blessings and warriors prayed for his aid. He was

engaged in continuous struggles with the giants, whom he always conquered with his mighty hammer that never missed its mark and always returned to the hand of its owner. In these fights lightning and thunder shook the world. Sparks from the hammer, as it crushed the hard, stony heads of the giants, were the ragged streaks of lightning which crossed the heavens during thunderstorms. Thor rode in a chariot drawn by two goats—the rumbling of thunder was the rattle of the chariot wheels—and he was generally followed on his tours by two servants. Sif was his wife, the goddess of fruitfulness and plenty, and he had three sons, Mothi (the courageous), Magni (the strong), and Ullr (O. E. Wuldor, glory). He is the most characteristic god in Norse religion and his life and activities were the subject of numerous tales.

Once his hammer was stolen, as he slept. Angry indeed was Thor when he discovered his loss. Loki was at once despatched to find and return the invaluable weapon. But the giant Thrym, who had it hidden eight miles below the earth, would return it only on condition that Freyja, the goddess of love, became his wife. Freyja, however, indignantly refused the proposal and trembled in her anger, so that the foundations of the earth shook. The gods took counsel, the safety of the universe being in the balance, for without Thor's hammer the gods could not maintain their power. It was suggested that Thor himself should dress in bridal clothes and go to the giant disguised as Freyja. Thor at first refused, but there was no escape, the hammer had to be recovered. Accordingly Thor was dressed for marriage, his goats were hitched to the chariot and Loki followed as bridal maid. Thunder and lightning raged violently on this journey, "the earth stood in flames," for Thor was angry and drove like mad.

A great feast was prepared in the home of the giant.

> One ox Thor ate,
> Eight salmon
> And all the delicacies
> For the woman intended.

He also "drank three barrels of mead." In astonishment then spoke Thrym:

> Where hast thou seen such a hungry bride?
> I ne'er saw a bride
> Eat so much,
> And never a maid
> Drink more mead.

The crafty maid (Loki), however, put the giant off his guard. "The poor maiden," said he, "has not eaten for eight days, out of longing for this place." Thereupon Thrym tried to kiss his bride, "but sprang back the length of the hall," exclaiming,

> Why are Freyja's eyes so wild?
> From her eyes it seems
> That fire doth burn.

"Oh," answered Loki, "the poor girl has not slept for eight nights, so much did she long for *Jötunheim.*"

> Then said Thrym,
> The king of giants,
> Bring in the hammer
> My bride to hallow;
> Place Mjölnir [the hammer]
> In the maid's lap,
> Wed us together
> With the hand of Var.[2]

But now Thor came into his own again. He grasped the short handle of his trusty hammer and slew Thrym and "all that race of giants." The world was saved and Thor returned in triumph to his hall in Asgarth.

Another god common to all Teutonic tribes was

[2] The goddess of marriage, servant maid of Frigg.

Tyr[3] (O. E. *Tiw*, O. H. G. *Ziu*, the high, the glorious. Cp. Lat. *deus*, Gr. *Zeus*) from whom we have Tuesday. In the beginning he was preëminently the god of war, and he was the personification of bravery and courage. References to him are found in Roman and other early writers and as late as the *Edda* he is still described as the god of war, although he at that time had been largely superseded by Thor and Wodan. Tyr alone had the courage to feed the Fenris-wolf, a huge monster brought up in Asgarth. When the gods perceived that the wolf was growing dangerous through his strength and ferocity, they decided to bind him. But the wolf would not consent to this, unless one of the immortals placed a hand in his mouth, as a pledge that there was no deceit in the matter. None of the gods seemed disposed to risk a limb. But when Tyr heard of the conditions, he did not hesitate to put his hand between the monster's jaws. However, as the wolf discovered that he had been tricked, he bit off the hand of Tyr and therefore the god had but one hand.

Loki[4] occupied a large space in Scandinavian religion; whether he appeared among all the other Germanic tribes is beyond proof. Originally he seems to have been "a good being," a member of the pantheon; some have even tried to make him a brother of Wodan and one of the three gods who created man. Gradually he drifted away from the gods and came to be the representation of evil, the embryo of a devil. He often caused worry and trouble among the immortals, but he also helped them out of many difficulties, as for instance by the recovery of the hammer, and at times gave valuable advice. Finally, however, his wickedness and overbearing became intolerable. He was captured, dragged into a

[3] He was the son of Wodan.

[4] The account of Loki, by Professor Anderson in *Norse Mythology*, p. 371, is quite erroneous.

cavern and tied on three sharp-pointed rocks. Above his head a poisonous serpent was suspended in such a manner that the venom fell into his face. But his faithful wife Sigyn sat at his side and collected the deadly drops in a cup. When the cup was full and she went away to empty it, the venom fell upon Loki, who then shrieked with horror and twisted his body so violently that the whole earth shook—thus the earthquake was produced. There Loki will lie until *Ragnarök* (the destruction of the world).

Other gods, especially in Scandinavian religion, some of whom occupied a significant position in the pantheon, were Balder, the god of purity and light; Forsete, the god of justice; Brage, the god of poetry and oratory; Heimdallr, the guardian of Asgarth and the founder of civilization among men; Freyj, the god of fertility, the ruler of rain and sunshine.

Some of the most important of the goddesses besides those already mentioned (the wives of Wodan: Jorth, Frigg, with her maids, and Rindr; Sif, the wife of Thor, and Sigyn, the wife of Loki) were Fröja, Gefjon, Fulla, Ithun and Nanna. They were the counterparts of the gods and the guardians of womanhood.

The *Vanir* were gods, but of a lower order than the Aesir (Wodan, Thor, Tyr, etc.) and of different and apparently unknown origin. Their home was Vanaheim, the lakes and rivers and the waters of the sea near the coasts. In the beginning the Vanir were the cause of war with the gods, but peace was made, hostages were exchanged and a mutual good-will was established and maintained between them for the benefit of the whole world.

The giants were the powers of evil in general; the wild nature, the cold winds, storms and all destructive forces in the world were of their making. They were

of two kinds, the *Thursar* and the *Jötnar* (giants proper). They were generally described as ugly, ungainly and fierce; their heads were often of stone or as hard as stone and their stature was immense. They were the enemies of the gods and men and they were nearly an equal match for the inhabitants of Asgarth. But individuals among them were often beautiful, and friendly disposed towards man " and the sons of Wodan."

The *Thursar* were the rulers of the wild open sea, over which Ran was queen, while the *Jötnar* were the inhabitants of the mountains and the barren parts of the earth.

Besides the giants, dwarfs, elves, Vanir and gods proper, there were several other beings, which played an important part in early Teutonic religion, and which in some cases have survived in the folk belief down to the present day.

In the *Saga of Hakon the Good* we read: " It was the custom in olden times, when sacrifice was about to be made, that the freemen should go to the temple with the supplies they would need while the feast of sacrifice lasted. They were all to have ale. All kinds of small domestic animals and horses were slain, and all the blood that came from them was called *hlaut* and was preserved in so-called *hlaut*-bowls. With the *hlaut-teins,* which were made in the fashion of a sprinkler broom, all the stalls and the inside and outside walls of the temple should be reddened, and the people should be sprinkled. The meat was boiled for the feasting of those present. In the middle of the floor there were fires, above which hung caldrons, and the drinking cups should be carried around the fire. The one who made the feast and was the chieftain should bless the cups and all the sacrificial food. First they should drink a cup to Othen (Wodan) for victory and the dominion of their king,

then to Njörth[5] and Freyj[6] for prosperity and peace. Thereupon many drank the cup of Brage.[7] They also used to drink their cups to their dead kinsmen, who had distinguished themselves." This description of a public sacrifice-feast refers to late historic times, but contains many primitive elements.

The early Teutons were plain materialists and had no hankering for a life beyond the grave, but they were extremely religious and they never began an important undertaking of any kind in war or peace without offerings and prayers to the gods. The object to be sacrificed was determined by the importance of the object to be obtained. Small animals, food, drink, etc., would be offered to the gods and the other spirits on ordinary occasions or when ordinary things were requested. Large animals, especially horses, were offered on public occasions, in emergencies or in trying times; in stress and danger or when victories were obtained or called for, human beings were often sacrificed. Then kings even offered up their sons and we have records of a people sacrificing their king to propitiate the gods. Besides "occasional sacrifices" the Teutons celebrated three great festivals, at which large offerings were made. The first of these was in the middle of October, the Germanic thanksgiving; the second took place in the beginning of January, the Yule time; and the third fell towards the middle of April, at which sacrifices were made especially to Wodan, in order to obtain his blessings for victories and successful expeditions.

Prayers to the gods were also common, but it was a general principle not to sacrifice or pray to excess. In prayer the suppliant turned towards the north, and some-

[5] The god of the wind and fishing.
[6] The god of fertility and the ruler of the rain and sunshine.
[7] The god of poetry.

times kneeled or threw himself on the ground before divine images.

Magic or sorcery in which the runes played an important part was common and even the gods made use of it. Divination was also employed.

Temples were apparently built by nearly all Germanic tribes in the early centuries of our era; but we have definite information of such only in the north. They were built in forests, which were the original places of worship, and which continued to be held in reverence, and trees were often sacred among the people. The temples of Scandinavia were of two kinds, one round (the earlier type) and another of oblong shape with a semicircular prolongation which was separated from the former by a wall. The prolongation was a remnant of the earlier form to which was added the feast hall for the convenience of the people.

They were surrounded by an enclosure and looked after by a priest, king or chieftain, as the case might be. Priests without other office were not original among the Teutons, but the priesthood was fully developed in the Viking period. Images of the gods were general. They were of wood, sometimes made of stone or metal, and placed on a kind of pedestal, in the semicircular prolongation, mentioned above, or even in the open.

The earliest conception about the "homes of the dead" was Helheim, a misty, cold and horrifying region, where dragons and other hideous monsters terrified the arrivals from the upper world. This did not satisfy later generations, who demanded a more cheerful abode "after their labors." Accordingly, the idea of Valhall grew up.

Valhall was the largest and most gorgeous hall in Asgarth, where Wodan received the heroes who had fallen bravely in battle. It was covered with shields and lighted by sparkling swords. It had 640 doors, through each one of which 960 champions could march abreast. In

this hall the chosen heroes led a life of activity and happiness. Every morning they put on their armor and marched out to a plain, where they engaged in mortal combat and slew one another. However, when mealtime came they all arose again and returned to Valhall, as the best of friends, and partook of the boar Saehrimnir, and the heavenly mead served by the Valkyrior, the female servants of Wodan. This was repeated in eternal monotony. In the early morning the boar was ready to be made into a new meal, as he came to life again every evening as fat and healthy as ever. Not all fallen heroes could enter Valhall: only those whose lives were noble and spotless were worthy of such honor. These were selected by the Valkyrior, and brought in triumph into the great hall before the god of battle.

The Teutons believed that the material world with its inhabitants, including the gods, would sometime come to an end. This catastrophe was to be preceded by long periods of continuous winter and by disturbances in nature and by degeneration in the moral world. Then comes the fatal hour. The gods are lined up in battle array for their last mighty struggle. They are met by the giants and by all the forces of darkness. The world shakes in its foundations. The ash *Yggdrasil* perishes.

The sun darkens,
The earth sinks into the sea.
The bright stars
Are hurled from heaven.
Fire roars
Against flaming fire;
High play the flames
Against the very sky.

But from the ruins a new world shall arise "and prosper forever." New gods will appear and a new race of men will inhabit the new earth. Evil is banished eternally and goodness and virtue shall live perpetually among mortals and gods.

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# CHAPTER XIII

## EARLY CHRISTIANITY

BY WILLIAM ROMAINE NEWBOLD,

I MUST ask you at the outset to remember that I can do no more within the narrow compass of a single lecture than sketch the broad outlines of a picture, omitting details which would modify to some extent the general impression of the whole and which strict accuracy would require me to introduce.

One may recognize in the development of early Christianity three important stages: first, the Gospel preached by Jesus; second, the Gospel preached, for the most part to the Jews, by the Apostles and other early converts; third, the form which this Gospel assumed after it had been preached by Paul, Peter and others among the Gentiles and had been subjected to the influences of Hellenistic culture.

### THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

The Gospel which Jesus preached was very simple, both in substance and in form. Its burden was that of the preaching of John the Baptist—*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (Mt. 4:17). By the Kingdom of Heaven or the Kingdom of God Jesus meant any sphere in which the will of God is obeyed. Thus, heaven belongs to the Kingdom of God; so also does earth in so far as God's will is obeyed on earth. And, in a slightly different sense, the heart of every man who obeys God's will belongs to the Kingdom of God—*the kingdom of God is within you* (Luke 17:21). Just what Jesus meant by His declaration that the coming of the Kingdom is at hand is difficult to determine. At least two conceptions of it can be distinguished in the Gospels. Ac-

cording to one, which is virtually identical with a prevalent Jewish conception, Jesus, as the Messiah, will return to earth at some time in the future with power and glory and institute Messiah's kingdom. According to the other, the Kingdom comes for each man when he begins to do God's will. Hence it was being initiated by Jesus' ministry, and its coming was to be prolonged throughout the period during which the *mustard seed* which He had come to plant would be growing up, the *leaven* which He was to introduce into the world would be *leavening the whole lump*.

Thus repentance and a change of heart by which man's will comes into conformity with God's will is the sole and sufficient condition of admission to the Kingdom of God.

Jesus also declared Himself authorized to reveal the nature of God, in so far as it concerns His creatures. God's attitude towards them is that of love, like that of a father towards his children. And His will, therefore, is that men should try to become like Him and should be actuated in all their conduct by no other motive than love to God and to their fellow-men.

Jesus frequently declared that the fate of those who fail to enter the Kingdom will be eternal death, but He never explains precisely what He meant by it. It is obvious however that he conceived it to be a very terrible fate indeed; so terrible that it was the only reason for His mission—*the Son of Man is come*, He said, *to seek and to save that which was lost* (Luke 19:19). And the eternal life which is to be the reward of those who do enter the Kingdom is in like manner left unexplained. It certainly extends beyond the grave, and Jesus frequently intimates that He knows just what it is, but He never dwells upon it. It would seem that He felt, and wished His disciples to feel, that membership in the Kingdom is the only thing of importance and that the change of scene

occasioned by death should not be an object of too much interest and concern.

Jesus preached this Gospel with authority. He declared that He and He alone knew the nature of God and was able to reveal it to men. He called Himself "Son of God" and also "Son of Man," a title which probably had much the same meaning to His hearers, for in the Book of Enoch, which was written about a hundred years before Jesus' time and certainly was known to some of the writers of the New Testament, the "Son of Man" is a celestial being who dwells in heaven with God awaiting the time when he is to be sent down to earth as the Messiah. Jesus also forgave sins on His own authority. He acknowledged the inspiration of the Old Testament, yet He dared on His own authority to amend the sacred Law of Moses—*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, . . . but I say unto you.*

Yet, notwithstanding these extraordinary claims for Himself, He never made Himself a part of His Gospel. He demanded that men should accept His message as authoritative, but He never demanded that they should accept even His own statements about Himself as part of the message. Even in the Gospel of John, where Jesus says more about Himself than in all the others put together, it is always the acceptance of His authority as the messenger of God that He has in mind, not of any views about Himself. Indeed, He explicitly warns His hearers that no mere paying of reverence to Himself can be offered as a substitute for acceptance of His Gospel—*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven* (Mt. 7: 21).

This Gospel was not new. Every point in it, except the imminence of the coming of the Kingdom and Jesus' own connection with it, had been taught by the prophets and was even taught in Jesus' time by the more spiritually

minded among the Rabbis. Yet it impressed His hearers as startlingly new and dangerously revolutionary. The popular religion conceived of God, not as loving, but as stern, jealous and irascible. Salvation was supposed to depend, not upon repentance and reformation, but upon the faithful observance of the contract made by God with Moses by which He had pledged Himself to give the Jews the land of Palestine and other blessings in consideration of performance of the Law. Religion, therefore, consisted chiefly in obedience to the Law, and especially to the ritual Law. This conception of religion Jesus sternly denounced.

### The Gospel Preached by the Apostles

Turning now to the Gospel preached by the Apostles: it included all that Jesus had taught, but it contained also other principles which Jesus had not publicly taught.

The Apostles proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus, of which they declared themselves the witnesses. They laid great emphasis upon it as affording conclusive proof, first, of God's approval of Jesus' life and work, and, second, of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, already widely accepted among the Jews. Thus that doctrine became a part of the Christian religion.

The Apostles also preached Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus had Himself admitted that He was the person foretold by the prophets and usually called the Messiah, but He had kept the fact in the background until just before His death. His disciples made it one of the foremost principles of their religion. In this way such of the Jewish ideas of the person and work of the Messiah as were not obviously incompatible with the facts of Jesus' life were introduced into the minds of Christians and exerted considerable influence upon later speculation.

The Apostles also preached Jesus as the Saviour of men from sin and the consequences of sin. This is beyond

all comparison the most important of the elements which distinguish the Gospel of the Apostles from the Gospel of Jesus. Not that they invented it themselves. Even the Synoptic Gospels put it beyond question that Jesus conceived of Himself as a Saviour, and there is no reason to doubt that John is true to the facts when he represents Jesus as at times speaking of the subject at greater length than is reported in the Synoptics. But, certainly, if Jesus had made it a prominent feature of His public teaching, which is the impression given by John's Gospel taken alone, it could not have been so consistently ignored by the eye-witnesses whose stories have been incorporated into our Synoptics.

It is not hard to understand why the Apostles attached such importance to Jesus' resurrection, for that was to their minds the final proof of His authority, nor why they thought of Him chiefly as the Messiah, for the idea was a familiar one to every Jewish mind and fraught with hope as no other. But what gave them this new realization of His power as a Saviour from sin?

In the answer to this question is to be found the key to the comprehension of primitive Christianity, and not only of primitive Christianity but of Christianity as one of the world religions. For if there is any single trait which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions it is its proclamation of Jesus as a Saviour. Other religions have their prophets and teachers, but Christianity alone proclaims its Founder as a Saviour. Myriads of men have avowed their belief in this doctrine, and although by far the greater number have meant no more by their avowal than formal assent to a more or less well understood statement, there remains a countless multitude for whom it has been the expression of an experience so profound, so compelling, that no persuasion, no argument, no threats, not even torture and death, could avail to shake their assurance of its reality.

As the theory which I am putting before you is probably novel to many of you, I must dwell briefly upon the facts upon which it is based.

Religious people, if they can be persuaded to talk on the subject, will often say that they are aware of a new kind of consciousness within their souls, a kind of which they knew nothing before they became religious, and this they call "the spiritual life." If they are Christians, they usually attribute the initiation of the spiritual life to Jesus. Now, just what do they mean by this "spiritual life" and what reason have they for ascribing it to Jesus?

There are many manifestations of the spiritual life and I cannot now attempt to describe them at length. A good survey of the more important will be found in Prof. William James' famous book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It will be enough for my present purpose if I call your attention to two of the more common types.

The most characteristic trait, perhaps, is a genuine distaste for all that is recognized as sin, even for those sins which had formerly seemed most attractive. Often the attraction disappears and is replaced by repulsion. More often, probably, it still survives and wages warfare with the new repugnance.

The second trait is one of which there are many descriptions, yet all agree that the experience is essentially indescribable. It is felt as an inflow into the deepest depths of one's interior self of a mighty stream of conscious life, independent of and foreign to one's self and utterly unlike anything ever before experienced. It is usually described in terms derived from the emotions—it is a "love" that embraces all sentient beings and even inanimate objects; it is a "joy" beside which all the pleasures of life pale into nothingness; it is a "peace" so profound that no earthly vicissitudes can trouble it. But it has an intensity, a vividness, possessed by no emotion and superior to that of any sensation, a "burning

sweetness," which poor fallen human nature finds all but insupportable. To the man who has had such an experience his former life seems like an arid waste, a living death, nay, like death itself.

These experiences and others of the same general type are not peculiar to Christianity; they are found to some extent in other religions. But Christians usually ascribe them to Jesus, or to the Spirit of God, which He is conceived to use as His agent. Why do they do so? Usually, perhaps, it is simply because they have received these experiences while under Christian influences and have been taught to explain them in this way. But in many cases the agency of Jesus is itself a part of the experience. And as this also is probably a new and strange idea to many of you I must take the time to give a typical illustration of such an experience. Let me quote the words of a Hindu who never called himself a Christian but remained to the end of his life a member of the Brahmo Somaj—the late P. C. Mozoomdar. After relating how, in his early life, although he had never been exposed to Christian influences, the sense of sin grew upon him, and how he was "mysteriously led to feel a personal affinity to the spirit of Christ," he proceeds:

*The whole subject of the life and death of Christ had for me a marvellous sweetness and fascination. I repeat, I can never account for this. Untaught by any one, not sympathized with by even the best of my friends, often discouraged and ridiculed, I persisted in according to Christ a tenderness of honor which arose in my heart unbidden. I prayed, I fasted at Christmas and Easter times. I secretly hunted the bookshops of Calcutta to gather the so-called likenesses of Christ. I did not know, I cared not to think, whither all this would lead. About the year 1867 a very painful period of spiritual isolation overtook me. . . . I was almost alone in Calcutta. . . . It was a weekday evening. . . . I sat near the large lake*

*in the Hindu College compound. . . . I was meditating upon the state of my soul, on the cure of all spiritual wretchedness, the brightness and peace unknown to me which was the lot of God's children. I prayed and besought heaven. I cried, and shed hot tears. It might be said I was almost in a state of trance. Suddenly, it seemed to me, let me own that it was revealed to me, that close to me there was a holier, more blessed, most loving personality upon which I might repose my troubled head. Jesus lay discovered in my heart as a strange, human, kindred love, as a repose, a sympathetic consolation, an unpurchased treasure to which I was freely invited. The response of my nature was unhesitating and immediate. Jesus, from that day, to me became a reality whereon I might lean. It was an impulse then, a flood of light, love, and consolation. It is no longer an impulse now. It is a faith and principle; it is an experience verified by a thousand trials. . . . In the midst of these crumbling systems of Hindu error and superstition, in the midst of this self-righteous dogmatism and acrimonious controversy, in the midst of these cold, spectral shadows of transition, secularism, and agnostic doubt, to me Christ has been like the meat and drink of my soul.* (*The Oriental Christ*, Boston, 1888, pp. 9–13.)

It will be, I think, obvious to those of you who are familiar with the New Testament that the experience of Mozoomdar must have been very much the same as the experience of Paul. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, must have had some such experience to inspire the language which he uses in the letters which he wrote while on his way to Rome to be exposed to the beasts in the Coliseum—*Jesus Christ, our true Life* (Smyrn. 4:1); *Jesus Christ, our inseparable life* (Eph. 2:2); *if any one has* (*Jesus*) *within him let him understand what I mean and sympathize with me, knowing what things constrain me* (Rom. 6:3); *in love, in the stainless joy which is Jesus Christ,*

*than whom there is nothing better* (Mag. 7:1). Again, it is some such experience as this which has been crystallized into the apocryphal saying of Jesus preserved by Origen (*in Jer. hom. lat.* 3:3): *He that is near Me is near the fire; he that is far from Me is far from the Kingdom.*

I am not, I will ask you to observe, urging upon you any particular interpretation of these phenomena. But I do hold that these experiences constitute a class of phenomena which occur spontaneously, which are sufficiently well defined to be made an object of study, and which, alone, supply the key to the comprehension of early Christianity. In fact, a man who has never had any such experience himself and has never tried, by diligent study of the statements of those who have had them, to acquire some sympathetic insight into what they are like, will find in the writings of the early Christians, and of many later ones, little but unintelligible jargon.

It was on the day of Pentecost that the Christian religion really came into being. There came to the company of the disciples, as they sat together indoors at about nine o'clock in the morning, a mighty, transforming experience. Whether the account which has come down to us gives a faithful picture of what happened upon that memorable day or not, whether there really was heard the sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, whether there really appeared tongues as of fire which sat upon each of them, whether they really spoke foreign languages of which they had before been ignorant—these are questions which each of us will answer in accordance with his preconceived standards as to what is possible and what is not possible in this world of ours. But of the central fact, of the mighty, transforming experience, there can be no doubt whatever, for it has changed the whole course of history. Nothing else can explain why it was that these humble and ignorant Jews, who but a few

days before, at the time of Jesus' arrest, had shown themselves arrant cowards, were transformed into veritable firebrands. Sacrificing home, family, friends, all that makes life worth living, they devoted their lives to the preaching of a doctrine which must have seemed to its first hearers an insult to their intelligence; they fearlessly faced ridicule, insult, mob-violence, imprisonment, torture and death; some of them certainly finally laid down their lives in testimony to the constancy of their conviction.

But it was not only the first disciples to whom this strange experience came. When they began their preaching it seemed as though the same power that had given them strength and courage was coöperating with them, opening the ears of their hearers, forcing conviction upon unwilling minds, turning sinners from their sins, supporting them in their efforts to tread the unaccustomed way of holiness, shedding abroad in their hearts, love, joy and the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." These earliest Jewish Christians, long before the time of Paul, to whose initiative some scholars would ascribe the introduction into the Church of this type of Christianity, dwelt together, we are told, in joy and singleness of heart. In the light of the new love which now suffused them all distinctions of rank and wealth faded away and those that had property sold it and distributed it among the brethren so that all shared alike.

These were the facts which gave the Apostles their new appreciation of the significance of Jesus as a Saviour. Just why they attributed these new and wonderful spiritual blessings to His agency we do not definitely know, but nothing is more certain than that they did. And not they only. Throughout all the early Christian literature this idea recurs again and again. It is the most constant and the most characteristic trait of the Christian religion.

But, however universal the recognition of Jesus' agency, it is by no means always conceived in the same

way; indeed, it is often expressed in such vague terms that it is impossible to gather from them a clear idea of what the author's conception is. Sometimes love, joy, knowledge, light, life, immortality, salvation, are described as the gifts of God "through" Jesus, sometimes as Jesus' own gifts. Sometimes, instead of love, joy, knowledge, life, light, immortality, God Himself or Jesus Himself are conceived to be given to men and caused to dwell in their hearts. Or, instead of God or Jesus it is the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Jesus which gives men these blessings or dwells in their hearts. The identification between two of these different points of view is well shown by the statement of John—*he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (*I John*, 4: 16).

Of these conceptions the one that eventually became dominant was that of the "Spirit." For the early Christians were compelled by the very law of their being, just as we are compelled, to interpret new experiences in terms of received conceptions, and the conception of the "Spirit" was familiar, not only to Jews, through the Old Testament, but also to Gentiles, for it had long played a prominent part in Greek philosophy.

It will be observed that all the conceptions of Jesus' office as Saviour which I have so far touched upon center in one point, that He is in some way responsible for the marvellous new experiences which were appearing in the Christian Church. But side by side with these ideas there grew up another and quite independent group centering in His death upon the Cross. Here again the association was not first made by the Apostles. Jesus had more than once referred to His death and had connected it with His work as a Saviour. But the nature of the connection He had never explained. To the Christians, however, His shameful death was a fact imperatively demanding explanation, and many explanations for it were advanced which I have not the time to enumerate.

Among them the one which became most widely accepted was based upon the notion of sacrifice. Jew and Gentile alike accepted as axiomatic the principle enunciated by the author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (9:22) —*Without shedding of blood there is no remission,* and many would accept as reasonable his further statement—*it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins* (10:4). The necessary inference is that if sins are to be forgiven a more precious sacrifice must be offered than any provided in the Mosaic Law. This is the reasoning which led to the doctrine that Jesus' death upon the cross was a sacrifice offered to God, a doctrine which, interpreted in various ways, has played so important a part in Christian theology.

Besides the experiences of which I have above spoken and which may be grouped together under the term "spiritual life," there occurred in the primitive Christian community a number of other phenomena which also the Christians attributed to the operation of the Spirit. Among them were prophecy or inspired speech, foretelling the future, symbolic acts, "speaking with tongues," healing diseases, casting out demons and the performance of sundry miracles. Time will not permit me to discuss these phenomena; I can only say that most of them have been reported as occurring in modern times—some years ago, indeed, I had myself the opportunity of studying a case of "speaking with tongues" which presented all the characteristics described by Paul in the 12th chapter of *1st Corinthians*—and that efforts have been made of late to explain them. But so far these efforts have been attended, in my opinion, with little or no success. And if we cannot explain them, it is not surprising that the first Christians could not, except by falling back upon the generally accepted explanation of their age, that they were due to "spirits."

Turning now from the earliest forms of Christian

thought and experience, let me sketch the modes of common action in which they found expression.

As the first converts were Jews, accustomed to the worship of the synagogue, they no doubt continued it, making such changes only as their new ideas suggested. They also continued to observe the Mosaic Law and the rites and customs sanctioned by tradition. Among these were two which were destined to develop into the chief rites of the Christian Church—baptism and the common meal.

Baptism was at this time practiced by the Jews as a part of the ceremonies by which a proselyte was admitted to Judaism. But it had been used by John the Baptist with a special significance—as a symbol of repentance and the remission of sins, and it was in this significance that it was taken over by the Christian Church. Jesus never Himself baptized, but it was practiced by His disciples during His lifetime and with His approval. In the *Didaché*[1] it is preceded by instruction of the candidate, by fasting on the part both of the candidate and the person who is to perform the ceremony. It was administered either by dipping or by pouring and either in running or still water, but preferably the former. The only prescribed ritual was the use of the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The common meal was not, strictly speaking, a religious ceremony among the Jews. But it was required that at every meal certain "Blessings" or thanksgivings should be uttered over the food, and the rules prescribing what they should be are preserved in the Mishna. It is believed that the Blessings now used by orthodox Jews differ little in form from those in use in Jesus' time.

[1] The *Didaché*, or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, was discovered in Constantinople by Philotheos Bryennios in 1875 and published in 1883. It is a brief manual of instruction in the duties of Christians as individuals and as church members and concludes with an eschatological chapter.

But Jesus had Himself, at the last meal which He ate with His disciples before His crucifixion, invested this simple ritual with a new significance. After pronouncing the usual blessings over the wine, He said—*This is my "blood of the covenant" which is shed for many,* and in like manner He said of the bread—*This is my body.* It would be vain for me to attempt now to discuss what meaning Jesus attached to these words or in what sense the disciples understood them. This much is certain, that by this act Jesus transformed the ordinary Jewish meal, with its customary Blessings, into the Common Meal or "Love-feast" which was from the beginning the chief religious service of the Christian Church and which at a very early date received the name "Eucharist," *i.e.,* "Thanksgiving."

In form the Eucharist originally differed very little from any ordinary Jewish meal of the period. A simple liturgy was provided for its celebration conforming in general to the prescriptions of the Mishna for the prayers to be said at every meal, namely, a thanksgiving over the wine, usually at the beginning of the meal, although it might be said at the end, another over the bread, which was regarded as including any other food upon the table, and a longer thanksgiving, in three sections, at the close of the meal. But there is one striking difference between the Jewish prayers and those of the *Didaché*—the former are thanksgivings for food and drink and prayers for material blessings, the latter, with the exception of a single sentence, speak only of spiritual blessings, especially those made known through Jesus.

From the very beginning the Eucharist has been associated in the minds of Christians with the sustenance and renewal of the spiritual life much as the body is by food and drink. Even in the *Didaché,* which is recognized by many scholars as one of the oldest Christian documents and which I believe to have been written in

Jerusalem before the year 70 (although in this I shall find few to agree with me), the idea of spiritual food and drink is found in the prayer offered after the Eucharistic meal: *We thank Thee, Holy Father, for Thy holy Name which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou hast made known to us through Jesus Thy servant: Thine be the glory for ever. Thou, Master Almighty, hast created all things for Thy Name's sake; food and drink hast Thou given to men for enjoyment that they might give thanks to Thee; but to us Thou hast given spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Thy Servant.*

It is a strange fact that the liturgy of the *Didaché* contains no consecration of the elements. The prayers are, as the word "Eucharist" implies, for the most part thanksgivings for spiritual blessings. They contain no request that such blessings be given to the congregation at the meal in question but only that the Church may be sanctified and gathered together into the Kingdom and that "Grace," *i.e.,* the Kingdom of Grace, may come and this world pass away.

Still more strange is it that in the *Didaché* the food on the table is regarded as a symbol of the spiritual blessings conferred by Jesus and of nothing else. There is no allusion to His death or to the bread and wine as representing His body and blood.

That the author could have been ignorant of this association is impossible and the reasons for his silence can only be conjectured. It is the more surprising because in all our other sources for the earliest period the ideas of the bread and wine, the broken body and shed blood of the crucified Jesus, the glorified body of the risen Lord, the spiritual sustenance received through the sacrament, are all inextricably intertwined. These are the ideas which color the 10th and 11th chapters of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and the 6th chapter of John's

Gospel. They occur also very frequently in the letters of Ignatius, which are more deeply dyed with sacramental ideas than are any other writings of the early age, and in the writings of Justin and Irenaeus. But it is needless to multiply illustrations from later writers, for these ideas are familiar and occur in nearly all before the Reformation. The usual explanation, that they are due exclusively to a literal interpretation of Jesus' words of institution, is quite inadequate to account for the strange vitality of a most paradoxical doctrine. It is not because those words admit of no other than a literal interpretation, but because the formula, however superficially repugnant to reason, has been felt to express a truth of experience that so many efforts have been made, century after century, to provide for it a satisfactory explanation in terms of the science accepted at the time.

The strangest aspect of the primitive Christian services was the exercise of the "spiritual gifts" with which sundry members believed themselves to be endowed. All these gifts, as I have above remarked, were supposed to be due to some spirit's possessing the individual manifesting them. But it was soon perceived that the words and deeds of the spirits were not all equally edifying. Some were incoherent, others merely silly, others inconsistent with the accepted principles of the faith, others offensive to good taste or even to good morals. Moreover, many scoundrels attached themselves to the Christian community and, by pretending to the possession of the spiritual gifts, abused the trust of the brethren to their own selfish ends. Hence arose the need of a criterion by which to distinguish the utterances of the Spirit of God from those of evil spirits or of deliberate swindlers. The usual criterion was the Gospel principle, *By their fruits ye shall know them.* In the *Didaché* it is stated that if an itinerant prophet stays with his host more than two days, if he accepts any-

thing in addition to enough food to last until he reaches his next lodging, if he asks money, he is a false prophet. If a prophet, speaking by a spirit, orders a meal, that is, a celebration of the Eucharist, and then eats of it himself, if he does not practice what he preaches, he is a false prophet. Sometimes the principle is applied to the words uttered by the Spirit. Paul gives as a test the words *Jesus is accursed* and *Lord Jesus,* the Spirit of God never says the former and no spirit except the Holy Spirit can say the latter (*I Cor.* 12: 3).

When any man's spiritual gifts had been thus tested and approved by the Church, he was recognized as a "true" prophet (*Did.* 11: 11). Thereafter he was not to be further tested or criticized, for disapproval of the utterances of the Holy Spirit constitutes the unpardonable sin (*Did.* 11: 7; cf. *Mk.* 3: 28–30).

Nevertheless, Paul lays down (*I Cor.* 12 and 14) two other restrictions—namely, that the utterances of the spirits must be edifying and that *the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.* This latter, as McGiffert acutely observes (*The Apostolic Age,* p. 524) *marks an epoch in the history of Christian worship.* For, in fact, the so-called automatic phenomena are seldom beyond the control of the will; they are usually induced by expectancy and refusal to exercise voluntary control, as any one can easily test by experiment. If then the prophet is to practice none save those which commend themselves to his judgment as edifying, the very condition of their being is taken away and they will disappear. If Paul's advice had been followed the charismatic ministry would soon have become a thing of the past.

The prophets therefore constituted, in a sense, an order of clergy. In fact, they were the only "clergy" of the early Church, if the word be taken to mean a class of men set apart for the performance of religious functions. Deacons had already been appointed, but

their duty was the distribution of the alms to the poor. *Ἐπίσκοποι* or bishops, also were appointed at an early date. They were, as the word indicates, "overseers" or "trustees" who had charge primarily of the temporal interests of the churches and in particular had the custody of the alms and the responsibility for their disposition. It was also expected that the bishop would discharge the duties of hospitality which were owed by the Church to any travelling Christian. Yet it is probable that almost from the beginning the bishops performed religious functions also. Since the prophets were the most honored members of the Church, it would be natural to select a prophet for the office of bishop and hence the two officers were no doubt usually held by the same man. Moreover, the *Didaché* expressly states that the bishops and deacons exercise the same ministry as the prophets and teachers (*Did.* 15:1). *Πρεσβύτεροι*, or "elders," are frequently mentioned in the earliest sources but their functions are not definitely specified.

The constitution of the earliest churches was undoubtedly due to the Apostles, and it is extremely probable that that of the church of Jerusalem, which had been directly instituted by them and of which I believe the *Didaché* gives us a sketch, served as a model for the others. Every church was supposed to appoint its own officers, for, since every church possessed the gift of the Holy Spirit, it was felt that the selection of the officers should be left to the Spirit, as, for example, the Holy Spirit, speaking through the church of Antioch, selected Saul and Barnabas for the mission to the Gentiles (*Acts* 13:2–3). But the Apostles were not only possessed of the Holy Spirit in a preëminent degree but were also directly commissioned by the Lord Himself to preach the Gospel and found churches, hence in any church where the wishes of an Apostle were known it is probable that they would be regarded as authoritative, and persons se-

lected and approved by an Apostle would be regarded as possessed of similar authority, especially when confirmed by the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking through the church to which he was appointed. Persons thus selected were in some cases and probably in all set aside for their work by the rite of ordination, or "laying on of hands," in which all the elders took part and which was regarded, certainly by Paul and probably universally, as conferring the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I have been endeavoring to describe the primitive Christian Church as it was in the days while it was still chiefly a Jewish sect, when most Christians observed the Mosaic Law not less strictly than their Jewish brethren, shared their national hopes, looking to the return of the Messiah for their realization, and never dreaming that the religion of Jesus was to become an almost exclusively Gentile faith, spreading to the remotest corners of the earth and for centuries to come moulding the evolution of nations as yet unborn. And as I turn from the narrow confines of Palestine and look abroad upon the brilliant Græco-Roman world, as I see the Christian faith with its rudimentary theology, its pure morality, its fervent devotion to the living Lord, its ardent spiritual life, entering into that busy pagan civilization, coming into manifold relations of attraction or repulsion with its innumerable religions and philosophies, with its political institutions, its moral principles and social customs, I feel that any picture which I may be able to sketch in a few paragraphs will be hopelessly inadequate.

If Christianity was to become a world religion it must renounce a large part of its Jewish inheritance. The Mosaic Law, already sufficiently burdensome, had been so enlarged by new distinctions and restrictions accumulated in the course of centuries that it had become a burden too heavy to be borne. That any large number of Gentiles would be induced to accept it was a vain

dream. But the rejection of the ritual Law necessitated a radical revision of the traditional Jewish plan of salvation. According to that theory, as I have said, God had made a covenant on Mount Sinai with Moses as the representative of the Jewish nation according to which God, in consideration of obedience on the part of the Jews to the entire Law then revealed, both ritual and moral, contracted to give them the land of Palestine together with sundry worldly and material blessings. Breach of this contract had brought upon the Jews all the disasters with which they had been afflicted; faithful observance of its terms, such as the Pharisees made their aim, would lead to the restitution by the Messiah of all that they had lost and very much more. Such was the primitive Jewish conception, and it was still the belief, probably, of the majority of the nation. But it must not be forgotten that many entertained nobler ideals than this.

It was to Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, that the Church owed the theory of the relation between the Old Covenant and the New which later became the orthodox doctrine. Paul admitted the existence of a contract between God and the Jewish nation; he held, however, that it was made, not with Moses, but with Abraham. The consideration was, not obedience to the ritual Law, but simply faith in God. Abraham represented, not the Jews as such, but only those Jews who had that faith. The significance of the New Covenant is this: faith in God implies faith in His Son, Jesus, and that faith is rewarded by the gift of the Spirit which carries with it sanctification and salvation. The Mosaic Law, which Paul conceives as primarily a moral Law, was designed to take the place temporarily of the influence of the Spirit, *demanding* that obedience which the regenerated soul gives willingly and necessarily; it is therefore not abrogated, but it is superfluous. The ritual elements of

the Law Paul regards as types of the New Covenant, but he does not develop the conception in detail. This is, however, done by one of his followers, the author of the anonymous *Epistle to the Hebrews,* who expounds the significance of the more important rites and shows that their fulfilment in Jesus makes unnecessary their further observance. The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* carries out the same conception to an extravagant extreme. Not only is the ritual Law symbolic; it was never intended by God to be put into practice at all. But at the moment when it was being given the Jews sinned by worshiping the golden calf, and by way of punishment an evil spirit was permitted to deceive them into the belief that the observance of this mass of useless and burdensome ceremonies would be rewarded by all imaginable blessings.

The conceptions of the rewards of virtue and the punishments of sin which Christianity had inherited from Judaism also demanded definition and revision. The older Judaism had had no definite belief in a life after death; all the sanctions of conduct which it proclaimed related to the life on earth. Hence the necessity of a resurrection of the body, if all pious Jews were to share in the glories of Messiah's Kingdom. But, before the time of Christ, the belief that the souls of the just enjoy a purely immaterial, spiritual life after death was gaining ground among the Jews, and the attempt to reconcile it with the accepted belief in the coming Kingdom had led some thinkers to represent the latter as rather a spiritual than a material Kingdom. This was the solution of the problem adopted by Paul, and, seemingly, by John. Paul teaches most emphatically the doctrine of the Resurrection, of which the resurrection of Jesus was the guarantee, but teaches not less emphatically that at the Resurrection our material bodies will be transformed into spiritual bodies such as was the body of Jesus after His resurrec-

tion. Thus the traditional conception of the Messiah's Kingdom merges into the conception of a purely spiritual life after death. But even Paul's authority was not sufficient to give this doctrine universal currency. For many centuries the belief in the resurrection of the gross material body was one of the most distinctive features of the Christian faith and was defended by some of its representatives with all the resources of ancient science. Indeed, I think one may say that the issue has never been definitely settled, that these essentially incompatible conceptions still maintain their ancient rivalry in certain circles of the Christian Church.

It would seem that the problems connected with the nature of Jesus' own person and His relation to God provoked no acute discussion until Christianity came into contact with Greek thought. He had called Himself the "Messiah," "Son of God," and "Son of Man," and had declared that He alone knew God, but there is nothing to indicate that He gave any detailed explanation of His meaning. In default of any such explanation His disciples would naturally interpret such expressions in accordance with the ideas which they already attached to them.

These ideas were themselves diverse and lacking in definition. Some conceived the Messiah as a man, a descendant of David, who was to be anointed with the Spirit of God to enable him to perform the work to which he was called. So also was Jesus conceived by some to be a man who had been anointed by the Spirit at the time of His baptism by John. Others thought that the Messiah was a spiritual being, existing in heaven before his appearance on earth. Jesus was conceived by some in the same way, and various theories were proposed to explain the relation between the preëxisting Christ and the man Jesus. According to one, Jesus was a man upon whom the Christ descended at His baptism;

according to another, the Christ was united to Jesus from His conception or birth, taking the place of the ordinary human soul; according to yet another, the Jesus who walked and taught in Palestine was not a man, possessed of a material body, but was the Christ himself, His body being merely an apparition or phantom. And of each of these theories there arose in later ages many diverse forms.

The most influential of the Christian thinkers, Paul and John, taught that Jesus was a Divine Being whose relation to God might be symbolized or expressed—it is not clear which—by the word "Son"; that He had come down to earth in order to save mankind; that He had now returned to heaven and had been invested with supreme power in order to continue the work which He had begun on earth. This doctrine Paul taught, not on his personal authority, but upon the authority of certain "visions" and "revelations" which had been given directly to him. The precise nature of the relation signified by the word "Son" Paul does not fully explain, but he intimates that the revelations contained more than he sees fit to tell in his letters.

### The Development of the Gospel Among the Gentiles

When Christianity came in contact with Hellenism its fundamental conceptions at once entered upon a course of further definition and enlargement. Many of the Gentile converts were familiar with current systems of theology and philosophy, and it was inevitable that they should endeavor to assimilate their new faith to their old convictions. And it so happened that the ideas of some of these systems resembled those of Christianity sufficiently to make the identification comparatively easy.

For three hundred years before the time of Christ the ideas of the Greek philosophers, and in particular

those of the Orphics, Pythagoreans, Platonists and Stoics, had been spread far and wide throughout the Orient by the dissemination of the Greek language and literature which followed the conquests of Alexander. They had met and mingled with other ideas of the most diverse origin, with the religions of Anatolia, of Persia, of Babylonia and of Egypt, with astrology, itself a complex product, and with many elements the origin of which can no longer be traced. And, most important of all, in the mind of Philo, the devout and brilliant Jew of Alexandria, whose long life comprised that of Jesus within its confines, these ideas had effected their most perfect amalgamation with the Hebrew theology. About the same time, in the middle or latter half of the first century, there was produced in Egypt that strange little book *Poemander,* the most important and perhaps the first of a group of tractates of uncertain dates, now passing under the name of "Thrice Greatest Hermes," the purpose of which is to propagate, under the ostensible authority of the Egyptian god Tat or Hermes, a philosophical religion derived chiefly from Plato and the Stoics.

These two, the works of Philo and the Hermetic books, are the most important surviving monuments of a movement which must have exerted considerable influence upon the speculations of the years immediately preceding and following the Christian era. The systems which they present are much alike in their fundamental ideas and both resemble in a very striking way the teachings of the primitive Christian faith. Both recognize one God, the Father of the All, whose essence is Light, Intellect and Goodness, and a Son of God, the Logos, commonly translated "Word" but more properly "Thought," also called the "Image of God" and the "Wisdom of God," who is the Maker and Sustainer of the universe. Both speak of a "Breath" or "Spirit"

of God to which various attributes are assigned but which is not clearly distinguished from the Logos. Both regard man as containing or capable of receiving a portion of the Logos or Spirit of God and therefore as himself, actually or potentially, a "son of God," although in an inferior sense. Both conceive man's salvation as consisting in return to God; both teach that salvation necessarily implies repentance for sin and conversion to a holy life through which man becomes more and more like God. And, most significant of all, both teach that man's aspirations towards holiness are initiated and supported by the inflow of a divine power into his soul, called by Philo the Logos or Spirit, by Hermes the Nous or Intellect. The Hermetic books even describe the transformation of the evil soul into a holy soul in the very language of the New Testament, as a "new birth," or "regeneration."

So strong was the affinity between Christianity and this type of thinking, which is generally known as "Alexandrian," that some measure of coalescence between them was inevitable. Even the *Epistle to the Hebrews* describes Jesus' person and office in language nearly the same as that used by Philo of the Logos, and towards the end of the first century John, in the Prologue to his Gospel, identifies Jesus of Nazareth with the Incarnate Logos, the Maker of the universe, in whom is Life and Light.

This was but the beginning of a process which continued in unabated activity for nearly two hundred years. Christian thinkers eagerly studied, not only the Alexandrian philosophy, but also its sources in the writings of Plato and the Stoics, and found so much that seemed to them true, and helpful in formulating and explaining the truths of Christianity, that some were driven to accept Philo's theory, that Plato had known the books of Moses, while others took the more liberal view, that the Spirit

of God had not disdained to enlighten the minds even of pagans, enabling them to attain to truths beyond their unaided powers. This movement reached its climax in Clement of Alexandria and his pupil Origen, the latter of whom, by far the most learned man and the most able thinker produced by ancient Christianity, developed a system of Christian philosophy into which so much of pagan origin had been introduced that its author was branded a heretic by the generations that followed him.

But the borrowing was not all on the side of the Christians. There arose in the course of the late first and early second centuries a number of sects, usually described as Christian, many of which really have little in common with traditional Christianity except the recognition of Jesus as the manifestation on earth of a superior spiritual being, come with a message of salvation to mankind, while others are wholly pagan. These sects are usually called "Gnostic," a word derived from the Greek word γνῶσις, which means "knowledge," more especially some knowledge not possessed by most men. The knowledge which the Gnostics professed to possess was knowledge of the spiritual universe, of its origin, nature and relation to this material world and to man. In developing their systems they used with truly catholic impartiality material drawn from Greek philosophy, from the Old and New Testaments and from all the mythologies of the ancient world. They also pinned their faith to the utterances of certain "prophets" or "seers"—we would call them nowadays "mediums" and "clairvoyants"—and wove into their systems the supposed revelations thus obtained of the spiritual world. Many of them, moreover, claimed that their doctrines had been derived by tradition from the Apostles themselves.

Gnosticism exerted a veritable fascination upon many minds and for a time it seemed as though Christianity were in danger of being dissolved into a multitude of

semi-pagan sects. But the leaders of the Church met the danger by an appeal from fancy to fact. They had in their hands the writings of the men who had seen the Lord and had been taught by Him—in which of them were these strange doctrines to be found? In the early part of the second century, when Gnosticism first became influential, men still survived who had heard the Apostles, and in the latter part there were many who had learned their Christanity from those first hearers —as for example Irenæus, who refers with deep feeling to his memories of the aged Polycarp's anecdotes of John, the Disciple of the Lord—these men were asked to say whether these fantastic theories had ever been part of the genuine oral tradition of the Church.

Thus the reaction against Gnosticism checked the tendency to interpret Christianity in terms of Greek philosophy and threw Christian theologians back upon the Old Testament and the Apostolic tradition, especially as handed down in written form. And if this was true of the eastern Greek-speaking half of the Empire, where the influence of Greek culture had always been strongest, it was still more true of the Latin-speaking western half. It was not that the barrier of language had prevented the spread of Alexandrian ideas, for Greek was the language of the western as well as of the eastern Christians for a hundred years or more, but rather that the genius of the Latin mind was different from that of the Greek. Its bent was rather towards law and statecraft than towards metaphysical speculation, and it found more congenial occupation in drawing from the Scriptures a definite system of doctrine and code of practice, a theory of the Church's rights and duties, than in peering into the mysteries of the spiritual world.

The struggle with Gnosticism was also a chief cause for the transformation of the theory of the work of the Spirit which was taking place during the second century,

and which may be summed up by saying that in the first century the Spirit inspired whomsoever He would, while in the third He worked only through the medium of the sacraments.

I have already shown that from the beginning it had been found necessary to put some restrictions upon the "liberty of prophesying." The utterances of supposedly inspired speakers were to be judged by the standard of the accepted doctrines of the Church; if they were found inconsistent with them, the "spirits" possessing the prophets were adjudged evil spirits. The progressive development and definition of the doctrine of the Church which resulted in part from contact with Greek thought and in part from the battle against Gnosticism imposed still more restrictions upon the utterances of the prophets, and inclined the Church authorities to look with disfavor upon manifestations which might at any moment get beyond control. Moreover, the credence given by the Gnostics to prophets and seers tended to bring prophecy into still greater discredit with the Church authorities and still further disposed them to rest their case exclusively upon the Old Testament and the written and oral tradition of the Apostles.

One important result of this depreciation of contemporary prophecy was the formation of the canon of the New Testament. The theory entertained by many scholars that the writings of the Apostles and other men of the first generation only gradually became recognized as inspired is at variance with all that we know of the point of view of the early Christians. Paul, John the author of the Apocalypse, Clement of Rome, Hermas, "Barnabas," Ignatius, all claim the authority of inspiration for their writings, and it is not in the least probable that those to whom those writings were addressed disallowed the claim. There were many other works now lost which laid claim to inspiration and their number was

constantly increasing; indeed every new movement gave rise to a flood of such works, some the product of sincere visionaries, but most of them deliberate forgeries. The formation of the canon of the New Testament was therefore rather a process of exclusion than of inclusion, of rejecting books regarded more or less generally as inspired, not of recognizing in the writings accepted an inspiration not formerly acknowledged.

The decline of the ministry of the Spirit was also furthered by the gradual disappearance of the spiritual gifts themselves, at least in their more striking and sensational forms. These phenomena are apt to attend crises in the spiritual life of the individual and were, no doubt, most frequent among converts won from the outside world. But when the new generations came into being, children of Christian parents, born and bred in a Christian atmosphere, they could have felt no need for any such violent wrench or conversion from the habits and tastes of a lifetime. Their religious life probably pursued, as we see to-day in Christian families, a more calm and equable course.

Protests against this tendency were not lacking. In the latter part of the second century Montanus, a presbyter of Phrygia, tried to restore the waning ministry of the Spirit to its pristine position of importance and founded a denomination which for several generations remained outside the Catholic Church. Yet even among the Montanists the same factors were operating, and the attempt failed. The spiritual gifts, however, long continued to appear more or less frequently. They must have been fairly common throughout the second century —Irenæus speaks of them several times—and even in the third, Origen testifies to their occurrence. One of them, at least, the power of casting out demons, the Church officially recognized in the creation of an order of the ministry, the exorcists, with an appropriate ritual. But

by the fourth century they were unusual and had entirely lost their original position of importance.

Yet faith in the reality of the indwelling Spirit did not pass away with the decline in frequency of the more extraordinary phenomena and depreciation in the value formerly ascribed to them. Even in the very beginning of the Gospel Paul had taught that *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance* (*Gal.* 5:22); that *whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away;* but that *love never faileth* (I *Cor.* 13:8). And so, now that the prophecies and the tongues and the "gnosis" were passing away, the more spiritually minded among Christians came, with Paul, to see that love to God and man and the holy life which love inspires constituted the best evidence of the Spirit's presence.

But that not all were capable of such spiritual insight is indicated by the growing tendency to regard the sacraments as not merely an *occasion* upon which or *a means* through which the Spirit was received but as *instruments* which necessarily conveyed the Spirit to the recipient. I shall be able to speak of the Eucharist only; the development was of the same general character in the case of the other sacraments.

The primitive Eucharist, or Common Meal, of the Jewish Christian Church, was a peculiarly Christian rite. The idea of using food in a sacramental way, that is, as a means of conveying spiritual blessings to the participant, was foreign to the Jewish mind. But when the Eucharist was transplanted into the Gentile world, the ideas originally associated with it encountered in the minds of Gentile converts conceptions of different origin which were sufficiently akin to them to make their fusion inevitable. Of these conceptions three call for special

mention. The first is the notion that by eating a sacrificial animal which a god had entered into and possessed, one may participate in the very substance of the god and acquire his immortality. The second is the principle upon which much of the ritual of magic was based, that by repeating certain formulæ of consecration over given substances certain properties may be conferred upon them, and, especially, that otherwise inert substances may in this way be given medicinal virtue. The third is the theory which is implied in a "Mystery" in the original sense of the word. A "Mystery" was a pantomime, representing some event, usually some tragic event, in the life of a god. It was believed that the persons participating in the Mystery, or, at a later date, merely witnessing its performance, acquired thereby special favor in the eyes of the god and would receive from him blessings not granted to others.

There is no doubt that these ideas were prevalent in the ancient world, although much uncertainty still hangs over their origin, the extent of their diffusion and the nature of the rites in which they were expressed. And there is also no doubt that the later development of the doctrine of the sacraments and especially the language in which it was formulated were influenced by these ideas. The unceasing efforts to define the relation between the body and blood of Jesus and the elements of the Eucharist, the increasing importance of the act of consecration, the tendency to regard the elements as mechanically communicating grace, the development of the theory that the Eucharist is not merely a commemoration but an actual repetition of the sacrifice on the Cross—these are all indications of the influence of these ideas upon Christian thought. Yet they were not the only or the chief reasons for the supreme sanctity which was and still is attached to the Eucharist by the Church. These

reasons lie, as I have shown, much deeper, in the personal experience of individuals.

It was this feeling of reverence for the Eucharist which ultimately led to its separation from the Common Meal. It was difficult to maintain throughout a meal in which many persons took part the atmosphere of devotion which was appropriate to the occasion, and hence the custom arose of observing the two rites at different times, the Common Meal coming more and more to be regarded as a work of charity only at which the poor of the Church were fed. It is probable that this distinction had come to be observed by some churches in the second century, but the details of the process are unknown. It is, however, certain that meals resembling the primitive Eucharist survived in some branches of the Church for many centuries.

It was largely under the influence of the foreign ideas to which I have above referred that the vague conceptions of the first and second centuries were finally defined and worked up into the carefully reasoned theory of the Catholic Church as the sole dispenser of salvation which meets us in an advanced stage of development in the early part of the third century and was completed in the fourth. The fundamental principle of this theory is the doctrine that supernatural virtue can be conferred in no other way than by one who possesses it. The layman can receive the Spirit only through the sacraments, the sacraments derive their virtue only from their consecration, the consecration is effective only when performed by an ordained priest, a priest can be ordained only by another ordained priest, and if one follows back the series of ordinations one ultimately reaches the Apostles. The first fairly consistent presentation of this theory is found in the writings of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage and Martyr, in the middle of the third cen-

tury. For example, in Letter 73 he says, speaking of the Church: *She it is who alone holds and possesses all the authority of her Spouse and Lord; over her we preside, for her honor and unity we fight, her good name and fame alike we defend with faithful devotion. We, with the divine permission, water the thirsty people of God, we guard the margins of the fountains of Life.*

While these changes in the ideas of Christians as to the conditions under which the Spirit, which was the life of the Church, was to be obtained undoubtedly had much to do with the increase in the power of the clergy which took place between the first and the third centuries, and is, from my present point of view, the most interesting of the factors working towards that end, it was by no means the only one. Probably of equal and possibly of greater weight was the imperative need of a central authority making for unity, to counteract the numerous disruptive tendencies of the period. The multiplication of new doctrinal theories, the insidious attractions of pagan civilization, the furious, if intermittent, blasts of persecution, made it necessary to vest somewhere the right to define what the Church believed, to discipline offenders against morality, to strengthen weak brethren and to fix the conditions upon which the lapsed might be received back into the fold. Eventually these and other powers were lodged in the hands of the bishops, either as individuals, or, collectively, in council assembled.

Whatever the causes, the practical result of their operation was the emergence of a conception of the Christian Church as a close corporation, consisting primarily of a body of ordained clergy who possessed the exclusive right of giving or of withholding the Holy Spirit, that is to say, eternal salvation, at their discretion. And this doctrine was the cornerstone upon which was erected the imposing fabric of the mediæval Church.

Let me sum up briefly the important features of the theory which I have been putting before you. The essence of early Christianity is not to be found in its institutions, ritual or doctrine. Of these, those which it received from Jesus were few and simple. Others it inherited from Judaism, others it borrowed with more or less modification from contemporary Hellenistic culture, still others it devised itself. But at the very outset it essentially was the kindling of the spiritual life in the hearts of many men under the same conditions—namely, the preaching of Jesus as Lord and Saviour. This was then and still is an extraordinary and inexplicable phenomenon. Never before, so far as is known, had such multitudes been affected, never before had such fruits in the way of reformation of character and purification of moral ideals been observed. This spiritual life was accompanied in the beginning with other manifestations of little or no moral value, which in time passed away. It was associated even in the minds of the first Christians with the sacraments, and ecclesiastical theory in time sought to chain it down to them, but it has never been bound by the bond. It has been more conspicuously manifested at certain times and among certain persons, but its essential elements, namely, a new attitude towards God, a new aversion towards sin, the inflow of a new consciousness pervaded by joy and love, seemingly coming from without, sustained and from time to time renewed by fresh inflows, especially in connection with the Eucharist—these have never disappeared from any branch of the Christian Church. It has created a new terminology, inspired a new literature, found expression in new liturgies, rituals and doctrines, and has exercised incalculable influence upon the evolution of the Western world.

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# CHAPTER XIV

## MEDIÆVAL CHRISTIANITY

BY ARTHUR C. HOWLAND

In discussing a religion which is considered by its adherents as God's direct and final revelation of truth delivered through his own person, the selection of a particular period within which the religion assumed a character of its own capable of being designated by any such descriptive term as mediæval might at first sight appear illogical. Yet while it can be said that Christianity is the same to-day as it was in the Middle Ages, and the same in the Middle Ages as it was in the time of the Apostles, it is equally true that, like any other living thing, Christianity is constantly changing and developing, and that it is not the same in any two succeeding generations. Under different environments the human mind reacts in different ways towards the same body of principles.

The Middle Ages as generally understood comprise the thousand years that intervened between the collapse of the Roman imperial organization in Western Europe and the Reformation or, in round numbers, the period from 500 to 1500. The old idea that this was a stagnant epoch, that such a cycle of years could be fittingly characterized by any such term as the Dark Ages, has long been given up. We now know that the human mind was as active then as at any other time, that the deepest questions of philosophy and life were propounded and answered, that constant change and readjustment were going on as at other times. Nevertheless, there were in the Middle Ages certain traits and certain conditions that serve to mark them off both from the ancient and

from the modern world. These formed an environment which caused the men of that age to envisage their religion and its mission in a particular way and gave to mediæval Christianity a character of its own.

The mediæval Church was distinguished from primitive Christianity by a systematized theology and a highly developed form of organization; and from modern Christianity by the absence of the competition and rivalry that has existed since the appearance of Protestantism. From both ancient and modern times it was distinguished by the fact that it did not exist side by side with a highly developed political society and so did not have to modify its rules or its theories at the behest of the State but could confidently assume a superiority to national organizations. Finally, the ignorance of natural science and of the modern conception of the laws of nature gave to the religion of that day a character in some respects far different from that of modern religion. By keeping these three features of the Middle Ages in mind—first, an elaborate church organization that had no rivals; second, the conception of a physical universe governed and controlled by the caprice of supernatural powers rather than by immutable law; and third, a primitive and incoherent state organization incapable of performing the most important tasks of society—we are in a position to understand some of the special features of mediæval Christianity.

When the religion of Christ became the universal faith of Europe, the development of an elaborate institutional life became a necessity of existence. Its wide and rapid extension after the days of Constantine meant for the mass of the inhabitants of Europe a conversion in name only. Pagan habits of thought, old standards of conduct and morality, could not be changed with the same ease as the practice of the pagan cults had been abolished at the command of the Roman government.

It was possible, however, to enforce an outward conformity to elaborate ceremonies and rites, the observance of which could be enforced on a population however indifferent to the inner spirit of Christ's teachings, and thus to create a concrete institution that would command the loyalty and devotion of a half-barbarous world. This development took place largely at the hands of Italian churchmen imbued with the ideas, and inheriting the genius of the men who had created the Roman Empire. The creative genius of Rome, as is well known, lay chiefly in law and administration. It is not strange, therefore, that church institutions took on a strongly legalized tinge and that the conception of formal law rather than that of the inspiration of the Spirit should have governed the relations of the ordinary man to God. A degree of formality grew up which threatened to impoverish spiritual life; an insistence on external acts in the religious cult which seemed capable of developing into a contract between the Church and its members whereby the former would guarantee ultimate salvation in return for the performance of specified acts of worship. In other words, mediæval Christianity was threatened with the evil inherent in every highly developed institution, the danger of sacrificing the spirit to the form.

That this danger did not overwhelm the Church, that Christianity did not cease to embody the highest spiritual ideals of the age, is largely due to the influence of that most characteristic form of mediæval religion—Monasticism. In origin a revolt from the Church, a protest against the worldliness that threatened to overwhelm it after the conversion of Constantine, monasticism was soon reconciled to the general organization and promptly took its place as the expression of the highest ideal of Christianity. Withdrawn from the world, interested only indirectly in questions of government and discipline in the Church at large, the monk could devote himself to

the interests of the mind and the spirit to a degree impossible for the bishop or the secular priest.

The type of piety thus developed does, indeed, strike us as something exotic. With its passivism, its asceticism, its pessimistic views of the world, it was more oriental than occidental. But Christianity was an eastern religion, and the logical mind of the Middle Ages saw in monasticism the true expression of its inner spirit. The great problem of Christianity in all ages has been to reconcile Christ's teachings with the standards of conduct imposed by practical life; to adapt the doctrine of brotherly love to the exigencies of the struggle for existence; and to determine what compromise, if any, shall be accepted between the rules of conduct laid down by Jesus and the needs of those who wish to succeed in the world. These questions are no less pressing to-day in the midst of the economic competition of the modern world and the bloodshed of national war than they were under the feudal regime. Each age has sought its own answer to the problem with greater or less success. What that answer shall be to-day is baffling the greatest religious leaders. But in the Middle Ages, it was found in monasticism. For the man of the world whether layman or secular priest or bishop, the answer was found in the standard of conduct that seemed to be required by the necessities of active life, by the desire for wealth, the love of power, the need of pleasure, the demands of ambition. For the monk it lay in the renunciation of all these things, the voluntary acceptance of poverty, the sacrifice of the domestic affections, the complete surrender of the will to a human superior and with it all thought of human ambition; and within the walls of the monastery absolute equality among the brothers without regard to their former rank in the outer world.

Thus two types of Christianity were recognized in the Middle Ages. One was for the world at large, where

though the teachings of Christ were held up as an ideal, a certain compromise was recognized as necessary, the Church with its rites and sacraments serving as mediator and providing for the ultimate salvation of its children notwithstanding their maculation by the world. The other was for the chosen of God whose spiritual strength enabled them to follow literally what the men of that age conceived as the pure teachings of Christ. As to which of these two types was the higher, the Middle Ages did not hesitate to pronounce. To them the monk was the true exemplifier of religion. The term by which he was designated and which served to distinguish him not only from the laity but from the ordinary clergy was *religiosus*, "the religious man." The choice of the monastic life by one who was already a Christian and a member of the Church was described as *conversion*, a term that reminds us curiously of Puritan phraseology and at bottom means the same thing—a deep religious experience that sets one apart from the world and makes him a participant in the communion of saints. To the Puritan no man was a member of Christ's Church who had not felt a conviction of sin in his own person, who had not cast off the old man and thus been born again into the Kingdom. But to the Middle Ages this Christian rebirth took place at baptism. It was then that the old Adam was cast off and the devil and all his works were renounced. Thus all men found themselves members of the Church without conscious choice of their own and secure of ultimate salvation, provided they remained her faithful children and followed the rites she prescribed. In monasticism was to be found the higher spiritual life of the age, while the doctrine of purgatory developed to reconcile the demands of divine justice with the acceptance of such diverse standards of life for different elements in the Church.

Thus monasticism stands forth as one of the char-

acteristic features of mediæval Christianity, a feature th significance of which was due to the elaborate develop ment of the Church as an institution and to the mechani cal nature of the religious life which institutionalism fos ters among the great mass of mankind.

Though the monks formed an integral part of th Church they followed ideals and adopted customs whic dissociated them from the general life. The cure of soul and the management of the property and of the politica interests of the Church were tasks quite foreign to thei fundamental interests. Hence, shut off and protected from such cares, they were free to devote themselves t other and more altruistic interests. It was they who were the leading scholars and the chief educators of the Middle Ages. It was they who revived the arts which had almost perished on the downfall of ancient civilization, and continued to foster them until culture began again to revive. Their charity was the chief solace of the poor when the wealth of the secular church was largely devoted to worldly ends. And it was they who furnished the missionaries who converted heathen and barbarous Europe to Christianity.

Since the monks, unlike the secular clergy, did not enter into competition with lay society, they were free to adopt principles of organization elsewhere unknown in the Middle Ages. The Church at large, like feudal society in general, was thoroughly aristocratic. Small chance therein for the poor man save as a parish priest who had no hope of preferment, and who was subject to the whims and caprice of the rich lay patron to whom he owed his place. The bishop's office, the cathedral prebend, the rich benefice, were reserved for the sons of the aristocracy who but too often used the ecclesiastical revenues to rival the pride and pomp of the lay nobles. The government of the Church, then, would have been in the hands of the nobility as fully as was the government

lay society if it had not been for the counteracting fluence of monasticism. The veneration in which the onks as a class were held because of their exemplifica-on of the ideals of mediæval Christianity caused them be summoned in large numbers to the highest positions the hierarchy; and in the monastery itself low birth as no bar to preferment. In fact, the monastic organi-tion was in theory purely democratic. The virtue of umility was supposed to be a bar to any claim of birth family. We are told for instance of a king of the ranks, the uncle of Charlemagne, who took up the onastic profession at Monte Cassino and was promptly t to a scullion's tasks in the abbey kitchen to prove the nuineness of his religious calling; and similar stories ound in the literature of the age. On the other hand, owever humble his origin, a monk of piety and ability ight rise to the highest position in his own house and ence be drafted into the secular hierarchy of the Church. this way it was constantly acquiring new blood and newing its strength. For a man without family influ-ce there was little opportunity in the Middle Ages ve in the Church and even there the door to influence ened only through the monastery. It has been re-arked that just as in Napoleon's army every soldier felt at he carried in his knapsack the baton of a field mar-al, so in the Middle Ages every monk realized that the ghest positions in the Church lay within his reach. The urch could thus command the best ability of the age; e State could not. And this is one of the reasons for e superiority of the former over the latter in that period.

To pass over the case of bishops, the papal chair was ore than once occupied by men of humble origin and every instance, so far as I know, these men rose through e monastery. The mighty Gregory VII was the son a poor artisan of Northern Italy; Benedict XI was id to have started life as a shepherd boy; Benedict XII

as a baker; Nicholas V as a poor doctor; Sixtus V as a swineherd; John XXII as a cobbler; Nicholas IV, Coelestine V and Sixtus IV were the sons of peasants; while Alexander V and Hadrian IV were once outcasts and beggars. The case of the last-named, Hadrian IV, is especially interesting as he was the only Englishman who ever occupied the papal chair. It should be noted, said an exulting monastic chronicler of his own day, how this man was raised up out of the very dust to sit among princes. Hadrian's father was a poor English clerk who deserted his wife and family in order to enter the abbey of St. Albans, thus reducing them to such poverty that the son was obliged to apply daily at the door of his father's monastery for alms. Much scandalized at such conduct the father drove him away with vituperation and the young lad, ashamed to beg or to dig in his own country, crossed over to France. Here, too, his begging met with scant returns and he wandered south into Provence where he had the good fortune to excite the pity and interest of a house of regular canons. Being a youth of pleasing appearance and ready tongue he was finally invited to join the order. He applied himself to learning and finally acquired so great a reputation for eloquence and wisdom that he was elected abbot. His administration did not run smoothly, however, and his monks twice cited him to Rome to answer charges of misgovernment. On the second occasion, the pope acceded to the petition of the brothers and sent them home to choose themselves a new abbot while he retained their deposed chief at his own court, made him bishop of Albano and later, because of his abilities, sent him as papal legate to Denmark and Norway to compose the ecclesiastical troubles of those kingdoms. Shortly after his return there occurred a vacancy in the papacy and this one-time beggar ascended the chair of St. Peter by unanimous choice of the cardinals. Our English chronicler adds an unexpected

note to the effect that when he had become head of the Church, Hadrian richly endowed the abbey of St. Albans "out of reverence for his father's memory."

But the opening of a career to talent, whatever its origin, was not the only democratic feature of monasticism. Nowhere can that characteristic be better observed than in its treatment of women. To the modern mind the Church has always seemed somewhat unfair in its attitude toward women in spite of their devotion to religion. It has always denied them a share in its government. In their hands the sacraments would be desecrated. Entrance into the holy of holies has been forbidden them. The priesthood would be degraded by the ordination of such candidates. In fact, though in all ages the Church has received its greatest support and devotion from women, its government and its offices and emoluments have been reserved for men. Not only this, but too often it has looked upon woman as the chief seat and instrument of the devil in his warfare upon man. Now in theory monasticism shared this view and in fact did much to foster and spread it, as was perhaps natural in an institution that laid such stress upon the virtue of chastity. But in practice it followed a different line and gave almost as much opportunity to women as to men. The convent of nuns is as characteristic a feature as the men's monastery, and that institution furnished a long list of saints canonized by the Church, which thus admitted that women might be mediators for humanity in heaven, although they were not fit thus to serve in the earthly church. Even on earth, monasticism allowed women a place among the rulers, for they headed and directed the convents and the lady abbess was often as distinguished a figure as the lord abbot. Nay, there was one monastic order, that of Fontevrauld, composed of both men and women, wherein the monks as well as the nuns were ruled by an abbess and none but a

woman could exercise authority over the combined establishments.

The position afforded to women is but one of many examples of the elasticity and adaptability of monastic institutions. These qualities were largely due to the remarkable organization worked out by St. Benedict of Nursia in the sixth century. He succeeded in establishing for his followers certain fundamental and clearly marked principles of life and conduct, and in creating an ideal that changed little from age to age, while allowing a freedom in details and practice that permitted western monasticism to adjust itself to varying conditions of environment and varying needs of spiritual life. In this respect it differed from the other institutions of the Church which tended to become fixed and rigid and incapable of change. Herein lies the explanation of a phenomenon that has struck most observers, namely, that the mediæval Church, in spite of a rigid system of theology and an elaborate sacramental machinery, was able to make use of all forms of religious enthusiasm, and to employ and direct ardent spiritual impulses that under other conditions would have led to revolt from the Church and the destruction of religious unity. Hence arose those reforms and revivals that so often recalled the Church to a consciousness of its mission and kept alive its influence in the hearts of men. Not a single reform arose in the Middle Ages, not a single new aspect of religious experience and practice, but had its inception in monasticism and found expression most often in the establishment of new orders or the reorganization of old ones.

Protestantism has never shown an equal ability to make use of and profit by the varieties of religious experience. Too often its leaders and prophets have found no place in the existing organization and have found themselves driven out and compelled to create new and

ɔmpeting churches. It has been remarked more than ıce that in the Middle Ages John Wesley and White-ɛld would have found their places in the existing Church ıd the movement they inspired have been embodied in a ɛform finding expression in a new monastic order. The ıme thing might be said of the great founder of the alvation Army and his followers. I am not sure but ıat even Christian Science, had it arisen in the Middle ges, might not have been shorn of some of its peculiar-es and use made of the undoubted spiritual force that ıaracterizes the movement. We might even have had, place of Mother Eddy, a new Saint Mary and the ıres wrought by her followers might have been attributed her intercession in heaven instead of to what is humor-ısly designated as Science.

This power of expansion and adaptability which mon-ticism showed in its best days gradually declined as the iddle Ages drew toward a close. It was itself an in-itution with rules and forms and ceremonies, and as ese hardened and became conventionalized monasticism splayed less and less ability to meet the new demands, e new intellectual and spiritual interests that marked e beginnings of the modern world. The last great de-lopment in mediæval monasticism occurred at the be-nning of the thirteenth century under the leadership of at most lovable and most Christ-like character of the iddle Ages, St. Francis of Assisi. But that much of e vitality of monasticism was already spent is seen in e rapid deterioration of his order. Scarcely was their under dead when a bitter struggle broke out among the ranciscans, some wishing to follow out the literal pre-ɔts and imitate the spirit of St. Francis, while the ma-rity sought to assimilate the order to the older monastic stitutions. The latter were successful and the Spirituals, their opponents were fittingly designated, fell under

ecclesiastical censure and were forced either to submit or to be burned as heretics.

This incident shows how monasticism was losing the power to embody and express new needs and impulses. That power once lost, there was no other organ then existing within the Church that could accomplish a readjustment between its institutions and the demands of a changing world. Herein lies one of the many causes of the Reformation. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Europe was undergoing some of the greatest changes in its history and with the loss of the power of internal development the Church was no longer able to meet fully the requirements of the new age. There followed the disruption of the Church. Four hundred years earlier, Luther might have been the founder of a new monastic order instead of the leader of a revolt, but at the beginning of the sixteenth century no other course was possible for a man of his peculiar temper and fierce ardor than the one he followed. It is true that the shock of the Reformation led to a great reaction within the older Church and to the formation of a new monastic institution, in some respects the most remarkable of all, the Society of Jesus. But with the coming of the Jesuits the Church had left the Middle Ages behind and entered upon its modern period.

I have pointed out that the institutional development of the mediæval Church threatened it with a legalistic conception of salvation highly prejudicial to the highest spiritual development, and have indicated some of the ways in which this tendency was counterbalanced by monasticism. Another characteristic of the period which had an influence on religious life was the universal character of the Church's authority. It had no rivals. No other form of church organization existed in Europe and heresy was at all times and in nearly all places absolutely negligible. From this circumstance we can trace two

consequences: on the part of the Church, an attitude of tolerance; and on the part of the masses, a simple and child-like attitude toward religion which made the Christian cult an integral part of their lives to an extent scarcely to be found to-day.

It may sound strange to some ears to speak of the mediæval Church as tolerant, and yet within certain limits this statement is true. So long as the principle of authority was maintained the Church felt no interest in the suppression of opinion and discussion or even of criticism directed against itself. The line was drawn at any denial of the Church's divine power and right to control the means and methods of salvation. Outside of the Church there is no salvation; such was the statement of St. Cyprian in the third century, and to this principle the Church gave unqualified adhesion throughout the Middle Ages. Let anyone deny the efficacy of the sacraments administered by a duly qualified priest, even though that priest were a sinner of the worst type, and no mercy would be shown the rebel; but once the ultimate authority of the Church as the mediator of salvation was acknowledged, the widest range of discussion and speculation was permitted to those who were clever enough to reconcile their positions with this fundamental assumption. Even the basic doctrines of theology were freely handled and discussed without restraint, and a Berengar of Tours could attack such a fundamental doctrine of the Church as transubstantiation without stirring up a Gregory VII to persecution, for Berengar admitted the final authority of the Church. With this reservation there were no ideas and no arguments but that could be and were put forward and defended by scholars.

As to criticism of the Church, its practices, acts, and shortcomings, there was no attempt at suppression, and attacks on ecclesiastical abuses were as open and bitter as anything brought forward by the Protestants in the six-

teenth century. That such attacks could be tolerated, in fact welcomed in some quarters, was due to the absence of rival churches. Everyone accepted the institution as divinely ordained by Heaven and these criticisms were regarded with much the same tolerance that we show to the bitter tirades of reformers against the corruption and incompetence of our own government because we know that the general principles of our political institutions are loyally accepted by the critics themselves. In the midst of this general confidence in the Church even the shortcomings of Divine Providence might be referred to without danger of punishment. A popular preacher of the thirteenth century in one of his sermons thus alludes to the mismanagement of human affairs. A certain mountebank, he said, was on his deathbed and called to him a priest who warned him to make his will. "Very well," said the mountebank, "I have two horses. One of them I give to the bishop, the other to the king. As to my clothing, it is to be divided between the baron and the other rich men." "But," cried the priest, "what about the poor?" "Why," replied the mountebank, "do you not preach to us every day that we should imitate God? I am imitating Him, for He gives everything to the rich and nothing to the poor." It would be hard to find a more caustic comment from a modern socialist.

Universal acceptance of the Church had another consequence, namely, the attitude of the common man toward religion. It was so much a part of his daily life and was accepted as so natural an element of human experience that there was none of that half-timid, half-apologetic attitude sometimes met with to-day when the subject of religion is broached. There was no separation between religion and business or between religion and pleasure. Sunday was not the Sabbath of the Jews nor the Sabbath of the Puritans. It was of itself scarcely more sacred to religion than the other six days of the week,

save that the compulsory cessation of labor gave a greater opportunity for attendance at divine service. When mass had been heard, the remainder of the day was frankly devoted to pleasure and social enjoyment. But if Sunday was not set aside exclusively for religion, neither was religion reserved for Sunday. The doors of the church stood open all days alike and at any hour one might step within to meditate or satisfy the impulse of worship, or to use the sacred edifice for any of the ordinary purposes of daily life. "Such customs," says a French historian, "which seem to us like a violation of the sanctuary were fully authorized in the Middle Ages. The Church allowed the people to amuse themselves and the clergy were one with the people in this matter. Religion in those days was not sad and austere. Life was not divided into two parts, a religious and a worldly. Nothing was profane, for religion embraced all of human existence. People journeyed along the road of salvation with gay hearts. Pilgrimages were often pleasant excursions. Religious assemblies, pardons as they are still called in Brittany, were noisy and crowded gatherings where peddlers, wandering minstrels and clowns opened their booths or set up their platforms. One did not pull a long face when he entered a church, for the church was a continuation of the street and the common meeting place of all. The choir, indeed, was reserved for worship, but the nave belonged to the people. There meetings were held, even councils of war and assemblies of insurgent citizens. One went there to stroll about, to exchange gossip, to talk business. There on rainy days the fairs were held for lack of a better place. The church bell was rung for the opening of the market, for town meetings and for insurrections, as well as for the divine offices. The churchman, whether priest or canon, was as worldly as the layman, and the laymen were as religious as the priests. Even among the monks there were jolly souls

who were invited to the weddings and the family festivals, and who enjoyed good stories even when told against themselves. Holy men these, nevertheless, and in spite of all very edifying, since they rendered religion lovable and caused some Christian ideas to penetrate into the rude mass of the people. None of the monks were more popular than the Franciscans. In the garb of their order, which seems strange to us to-day but differed little from the costume of that period, they went about preaching, collecting, begging, entering the homes, inquiring about the wife and children, giving advice, prescribing remedies, distributing blessings. Mingling closely with the common people they shared all their instincts, even the instinct of revolt against the great lords of the Church, and naturally sided with the communes against their lord bishops."

Any consideration of the popular religious life of the Middle Ages would be incomplete that did not take into account their conception of the physical universe and of the forces which governed it. Those centuries have often been designated as the Age of Faith, but their superiority to modern times in respect to this virtue was due in some degree to their lack of knowledge. The conception of natural phenomena governed by fixed and unchanging laws was unknown. Every occurrence in nature was the result of the arbitrary act of some higher power, friendly or malignant. The air was the special domain of demons who sought thence to work their evil wills on men. Every unpropitious event was the work of devils—the storm, the drought, the pest of insects, the attack of savage beasts; so, too, disease and misfortune of every kind, war, pestilence and famine, lightning and shipwreck. To-day, with increasing control over the forces of nature and greater knowledge of the laws under which the physical universe functions, man has been enabled to modify his material environ-

ment, to avoid many catastrophes and to secure fairly adequate and regular means of sustaining life. We have harnessed the forces of nature and feel that we know the proximate causes of physical phenomena even though the ultimate cause still escapes us. The knowledge that the heavenly bodies move in orbits that can be mathematically determined, that the spread of malaria is due to mosquitoes whose elimination causes the disease to disappear, that small-pox is a germ disease that can be combatted by sanitation and vaccination—facts such as these tend to weaken a belief in the arbitrary interference of good or bad spirits in the orderly course of nature. But in the Middle Ages the conception of the reign of law was wanting. Each occurrence was due to the interference of supernatural powers actuated by the same sort of motives as man himself and differing from him chiefly only in the possession of greater powers. The influence of Satan and his hosts was measured by the extent of the evils of daily life, and mediæval man would have lived in an atmosphere of terror had he not been able to summon to his aid the help that God placed within his reach through the mediation of the Church.

To the popular mind this divine protection and assistance could most readily be secured by appeal to the saints. For their subordinate position in heaven, for their want of divine authority, for their possession of intermediary powers only, compensation was found in their numbers, their human qualities and the restriction of their interests in so many cases to particular fields of activity. Thus each guild of workmen was placed under the protection of a particular saint, each district had its patron in heaven. Some saints instead of looking after a local group of people interested themselves in some special field of work. St. Nicholas saved shipwrecked sailors; St. Eligius cured sick horses, probably because he was the patron of blacksmiths; St. Didier was ap-

pealed to for protection of the crops from moles and vermin; in Béarn there was a local saint, Plouradou, who kept children from crying. In fact, there was not a danger nor an annoyance that could threaten the people of the Middle Ages but there was some saint whose business it was to furnish protection when properly appealed to. Nations, too, had their heavenly advocates. Thus St. George fought for England and St. Michael for France, so that when these two countries were at war there must have been something like commotion in heaven.

In popular religion pagan ideas of magic survived throughout the Middle Ages. Honor paid to the heavenly powers was supposed to secure their intervention without regard to the moral condition or spiritual state of the suppliant, as may be seen in the story of the robber who had such veneration for the Virgin that he never set out to commit a crime without first repeating an *Ave Maria* and praying her not to permit him to die in that sin. When at last he was captured and hung he remained alive three days on the gallows and when taken down by the astonished authorities declared that his feet had been supported by a beautiful virgin all that time so that he did not choke. On promising amendment, he was allowed to go free. Another story showing the magic effect of formula is that of the bird owned by a pious old woman who had such a veneration for St. Thomas of Canterbury that she was always repeating, "St. Thomas, have mercy on me," until the bird had learned the phrase. One day a hawk seized the old woman's pet and was flying away with it when it cried out the magic words and was released in safety by the interposition of the saint.

Like examples of superstition might be multiplied indefinitely; and proofs of the use by the ignorant masses of relics, holy water, the Eucharist, etc., as fetishes pure and simple abound in mediæval literature. Such practices,

however, were never sanctioned by the official teaching of the Church, though it must be admitted that its officers often made use of these superstitions and even encouraged them as a means of restraint and control over the turbulent masses. And this cannot be reckoned as cunning or hypocrisy on their part, for the clergy shared with the people their culture and their outlook upon the world.

In considering various characteristics of mediæval Christianity we cannot help observing that most of them have come down in some form and to some extent into the religious society of our own day. Manifestations of superstition and religious terror are by no means rare among the ignorant. In many directions the deadening effects of ceremonial observances on the free development of spiritual life may be noted. In the matter of tolerance toward religious discussion and criticism, we make claim to a still greater amount of liberality even though it may sometimes be based on indifference rather than on conviction. But there was one respect in which the position of the mediæval Church was unique, since it resulted from a condition of society never likely to be seen again. I refer to the relations of the Church to the State and the theories upon which the relation was based.

Throughout the Middle Ages the Church and the State were united and the two institutions were considered simply as two aspects of a common and unified organization of mankind. Both depended for their sanction on the divine will, and inasmuch as that will could not be conceived as expressing itself in heterogeneous forms any real dissociation of Church and State seemed like a denial of the divine unity. The two were, it is true, separate organizations and each pursued certain ends peculiar to itself, but both existed for one ultimate purpose, the salvation of man. St. Augustine, in the fifth century, had been the first to consider their relation to each other as parts of the same divine plan. In one of the great books

of earlier Christian literature, *De Civitate Dei,* "God's State," he taught that the various empires of the ancient world had come into existence by the will of God in order that mankind might be brought together in unity and disciplined so as to prepare the world for the appearance of Christ and the reception of His message. Now that Christ had come, the Church He founded was the true and the higher State to which all His followers owed their first allegiance. Not that Augustine conceived that the new dispensation had removed all need of the temporal state. It still existed to suppress crime, to preserve order, to defend the Church of God against its enemies and maintain the unity of the faith. But its position was to be a subordinate one and its authority dependent on obedience to God's will. This view of the inferior and ancillary position of the State in relation to the Church was never lost sight of, though it was obscured in the following centuries by the confusion and anarchy attendant on the fall of the Roman empire and the setting up of the new Germanic governments. For a time, indeed, it seemed as though the position of the two organizations was to be reversed, for the secular powers had need of the Church's wealth and authority, and its separate life was in danger of being absorbed by feudalism. Toward the end of the eleventh century, however, the ecclesiastical theory was reëstablished and maintained its ascendancy in the realm of political speculation throughout the remainder of the mediæval period.

It was an age when men's minds were completely dominated by the conception of unity. The universe was a single whole ruled by one Lord, Jesus Christ. So, too, each part of the universe was a unit under the same Ruler. Mankind itself was one mystic body ruled by Christ and organized in one Church of which He was the head. His representative and vice-regent on earth, however, was the pope to whom men owed obedience in

all things as to God. If it had not been for Adam's disobedience and fall, no other organization would have been necessary. But with sin came violence and with violence, domination of man over his fellows. Thus arose political government, which was permitted, indeed, but not ordained, by God. "Who does not know," wrote Pope Gregory VII, "that kings and dukes have inherited their power from those who, ignorant of God, have succeeded with blind presumption in establishing domination over their equals by means of pride, rapine, perfidy, murder, and all wickedness, at the instigation of the devil, the prince of this world?"

Such being the origin of secular government, the creature of ambition and injustice, it could find a legitimate place in the scheme of Divine Providence only by being sanctified and hallowed by the Church. Worldly power was instituted by man, the ecclesiastical power by God, which thus has the right and the duty to supervise secular government. The humblest priest, through the authority given him to administer the sacraments and thus nourish the spiritual life of man, is superior to the greatest king or emperor whose activities are limited to mundane interests; while the pope, who unites in himself the whole sum of sacerdotal power, is the supervisor and ruler of all mankind. It is by his hands, as the divinely appointed head of the Church, that God transmits to princes their authority over their subjects, and thus consecrates the State so far as it is capable of consecration. If, however, the prince neglects his duty, if he is unjust or tyrannical, if he is unmindful of the spiritual welfare of his subjects or of the interests of the superior body, the Church, it is for the pope to depose him, to release his subjects from their oaths of allegiance and to secure a new ruler who is willing to promote their eternal welfare.

These views of the subordination of the temporal to

the spiritual power were expressed most clearly in the Middle Ages by Boniface VIII in the famous bull *Unam Sanctam*. There is, he said, but one universal Church, of which Christ is head, whose vicar on earth is the successor of St. Peter. In this Church and under its control are two kinds of authority, spiritual and temporal. Whoever claims that the temporal power is not in the hands of the pope has ill understood God's ordinances. Both are under the control of the Church. The spiritual power is wielded directly by the priest, but the temporal by the hands of kings and soldiers, yet only for the benefit of the Church and at its will and sufferance. It is fitting that temporal authority should be subject to the spiritual power for it is a divine ordinance that the lower should be ruled by the higher. "It behooves us, therefore," he goes on, "the more freely to confess that the spiritual power excels in dignity and nobility any form whatsoever of earthly power, as spiritual interests exceed the temporal in importance. . . . For the truth bearing witness, it is for the spiritual power to establish the earthly power and to judge it, if it be not good. . . . If the earthly power shall err, it shall be judged by the spiritual power; if the lesser spiritual power err, it shall be judged by the higher. But if the supreme power (*i.e.*, the papacy) err, it can be judged by God alone and not by man, the apostles bearing witness, saying, the spiritual man judges all things but he himself is judged by no one. . . . We, moreover, proclaim, declare and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

Though this famous exposition of the position of the Church in its relation to the State was not made until the close of the thirteenth century, the same theory was implied and acted upon in the eleventh by Gregory VII. His ideal was that of a pope supervising, as God's agent,

the administration of the world, protecting the weak, encouraging the upright, warning and deposing the despot and ushering in the reign of justice and righteousness. It was a lofty ideal, "and could his dreams have been carried out in the purity and scope of their creator they would have constituted 'almost the highest earthly form in which mankind could have seen the expression of its unity and harmony.'" That they were impossible of realization was due to the fallible human nature of the men who directed the destinies of the Church. Whatever may be our beliefs as to its divine inspiration, it would be a bold student of history who would claim that this inspiration extended to the political activities of the popes in their relations with the princes of Europe. The position of the head of Christendom as temporal ruler of a state in Central Italy, the struggles and intrigues necessary to protect his political independence, first against the claims of Germany and later against those of France and Spain, as well as the worldly ambitions and temporal interests of churchmen elsewhere, demonstrated the weakness of their claim to be acting as the unbiased arbiters of Europe.

And yet, though the Church's claim to the supervision of the State's activities and to the right of judging the justice of its conduct was impossible of realization, we should not blind ourselves either to the greatness of its motives or the value of what it really accomplished in this direction. Outside the papal domain in Italy the Church was an international institution, standing above all secular governments. Its universal recognition made it a power whose moral judgments had more weight than positive laws and the fear of its condemnation restrained many an unjust ruler and made the lot of the common people more endurable. It was a standing protest against the doctrine of the unlimited sovereignty of the State. To-day the State stands above everything. The life and

fate of every one of its citizens is subject to its absolute commands and there is no appeal from its decisions, however unjust they may be. This was a situation unknown in the Middle Ages, and we are suffering to-day for the want of some institution through which the moral sense of mankind may assert itself against the demands of political force.

The Church still holds to-day to the general premises on which it based the theory of its relations to the State in the Middle Ages. These premises include a belief in the divine governance of human affairs, the divine institution of all human authority and the right of the Church to the free exercise of its functions as the guardian of the eternal interests of mankind as opposed to their temporal interests, which are the care of the State. The practical difference in the application of these principles, then and now, is due first, to the greater emphasis laid in the Middle Ages on the claims of the future life, owing partly to the hard conditions under which men lived and the need of offering a compensation in the world to come for the evils and sufferings of this life; and, second, to the low stage of mediæval political organization which disqualified the State from performing many of the functions which it undertakes to-day. This weakness enabled the Church to set what limits it chose to its own activities and even forced it to assume the control of many interests which in modern times are considered either partly or entirely secular and so under the jurisdiction of the State. Thus, in the Middle Ages, the Church attended to the relief of the poor and supervised all charitable activities. Education, whether religious or secular, was in its charge and it preserved a strict censorship of ideas. It maintained a system of courts which followed a more enlightened procedure than the courts of the state and had a wider jurisdiction. Not only did they claim exclusive control over Church

property and over all cases, whether civil or criminal, in which the members of the clergy were interested, and in cases involving the rites or sacraments of the Church, such as marriage, legitimacy, and the probate of wills: but these Church courts were also open for the adjudication of all affairs of the weak and helpless, such as widows and orphans and for all who claimed to be the victims of injustice in the secular courts. In addition to the wide jurisdiction of its courts, the Church claimed the exclusive control of the immense wealth which the piety of ages had bestowed upon it until it was estimated that it possessed one-quarter of the land of Europe. It denied the right of the State to tax this property or to have any voice in its management or disposition. It even went farther and sought to determine, to a considerable extent, the economic conditions under which the people of Europe lived. It forbade the charging of interest on loans; it advocated the theory of the just price for commodities, which tended to interfere with the natural laws of supply and demand; it was interested in questions of competition and sought to maintain an equality of economic opportunity among members of the same class or trade; and it attempted to prevent the exploitation of the weak by the strong, so that a form of Christian socialism may be said to have existed in the Middle Ages.

Although the exercise of all these forms of secular authority was largely forced upon the Church by the incapacity of the temporal power, they gave rise to claims and ambitions which the ecclesiastical organization refused to abandon voluntarily when Europe emerged from feudalism and the State attempted to resume those functions which it had allowed to fall from its grasp since the days of the Roman empire. There is an instinct in human nature which prevents any body of men from willingly surrendering such powers or authority as they have once possessed and so the Church clung to its secular preroga-

tives long after the conditions which created them had ceased to exist. Before the close of the Middle Ages the modern State had come into existence, with its strong national feeling, its intense patriotism, its secularization of interests and its jealousy of outside interference. It demanded the exclusive control of its own destinies and strongly resented the interference of the Church. There followed from the thirteenth century down a series of struggles between the secular and the ecclesiastical powers in which the Church yielded step by step, but only under the pressure of superior force. It never willingly surrendered a single position and its reluctance to grant concessions, to recognize the changed conditions that had given the new states the power and the will to administer the temporal affairs of their own citizens, created in those bodies a spirit of suspicion and hostility that was the political cause of the Reformation. When to these causes of disaffection there were added the secular preoccupations following the Renaissance, the economic rivalries that arose after the Age of Discovery and the theological disputes of the sixteenth century, the Great Revolt occurred, and the mediæval ecclesiastical system disappeared.

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